A Desk-Book of Errors in English

Frank H. Vizetelly

STANDARD DESK-BOOK SERIES

Benedictines

STANDARD DESK-BOOK SERIES

A Desk-Book of Errors in English

Including Notes on Colloquialisms and Slang to be Avoided in Conversation

By FRANK H. VIZETELLY, Litt.D., LL.D.

Managing Editor of "Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary of the English Language"; Author of "Essentials of English Speech and Literature," Etc.

REVISED EDITION

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
NEW YORK and LONDON

Copyright, 1906 and 1920, by
FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY

[*Printed in the United States of America*]

Copyright Under the Articles of the Copyright Convention
of the Pan-American Republics and the United States,
August 11, 1910

PREFACE

THE fact that this little book has passed through many editions, and now enters on a new one in revised form, is ample answer to its writer's prayer when, with the aid of his Publishers, he launched it on an uncertain voyage over the seas of time—

"Go, little book, God send thee good passage,
And specially let this be thy prayer:
Unto them all that thee will read or hear,
Where thou art wrong, after their help to call,
Thee to correct in any part or all."

(*Chaucer.*)

It is with sincere gratitude to the Publishers that the author acknowledges the results achieved to have been due wholly to their kindly interest and indefatigable efforts. He ventures to hope that this new edition, and such subsequent editions as time may require, will be found to measure fully up to the expectations of the discriminating Public on which it depends for support.

F. H. V.

NEW YORK, *January, 1920.*

INTRODUCTORY

In these days when the vernacular of the street invades the home; when illiterate communications corrupt good grammar; and when the efforts of the teachers in the public schools are rendered ineffective by parents careless of their diction, constant attempts are being made to point out the way to that "Well of English undefiled" so dear to the heart of the purist. But, notwithstanding these efforts to correct careless diction, the abuse and misuse of words continue. The one besetting sin of the English-speaking people is a tendency to use colloquial inelegancies, slang, and vulgarisms, and against these, as against the illiteracies of the street, it is our duty to guard, nowadays more so than at any other time, since what is learnt in the schoolroom is soon forgotten or displaced by association with illiterate playfellows, or by occasionally hearing words misused at home.

Of the purely syntactical side of the English language, no less a master of its intricacies and niceties than Thomas Jefferson has said "I am not a friend to a scrupulous purism of style; I readily

sacrifice the niceties of syntax to euphony and strength. It is by boldly neglecting the rigorisms of grammar that Tacitus has made himself the strongest writer in the world. The hyperesthetics call him barbarous; but I should be sorry to exchange his barbarisms for their wiredrawn purisms. Some of his sentences are as strong as language can make them. Had he scrupulously filled up the whole of their syntax, they would have been merely common. To explain my meaning by an English example, I will quote the motto of one, I believe, of the regicides, of Charles I., 'Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.' Correct its syntax 'Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.' It has lost all the strength and beauty of the antithesis." And Jefferson continued: "Where strictness of grammar does not weaken expression, it should be attended to. But where, by small grammatical negligences, the energy of an idea is condensed, or a word stands for a sentence, I hold grammatical rigor in contempt."

The English language is the most flexible language in the world. Indeed, it is so flexible that some of its idioms are positively startling. Could any phrase be more so than "I don't think it will rain"?—Simple enough as an idiom but positively absurd when analyzed. We say "*I don't think* it will rain" when we mean "I do think it will not rain."

Again, we say "All over the world" when we should say "Over all the world," and "the reason why" instead of "the reason that." Usage has made our language what it is; grammatical rules strive to limit it to what it ought to be. In many instances usage has supplanted grammatical rules. Hundreds of words have been used by masters of English in ways that violate these rules. These uses are to be found to-day recorded by the dictionaries because lexicographers recognize it is their duty to present the language as they find it used by the people. It is to the people, not to the purists, that one must look for the enriching of our mother tongue. To them it is as impossible to confine the English language within the bonds of grammatical rules as it is to stem the tide of the sea. For them all matters that relate to English speech can be decided only by the law of good usage. This, and this alone is their Court of Last Resort. Withal, the observance of certain conventional rules does no harm if it helps him who speaks carelessly to produce a refined style of diction and writing, or if it teaches him who does not know, what to say and how to say it.

The secret of strength in speech and writing lies in the art of using the right word in the right place; therefore, careful speakers and writers should aim to command not only a large vocabulary but a

wide and correct knowledge of the meanings of words. These can be most readily acquired by noting the meaning of every new word across which one may come in reading, and by constantly consulting a dictionary, preferably one which compares or contrasts words in such a manner as to bring out clearly the finer and nicer distinctions in their meanings—such distinctions as are necessary to the student to put him into possession of the essential differences of the words compared. Learn the meaning of words and your tongue will never slip. As Southey has said, "the greatest wisdom of speech is to know when, and what, and where to speak; the time, matter, and manner."

The best asset in life is knowledge. Knowledge well-grounded may be secured by the systematic study of words. The desirability of exercising great care not only in the selection of words, but in marshaling them in their correct order must be apparent to any one familiar with some of the errors committed by writers who, notwithstanding the blunders they have made, have acquired reputation as authors of good English. Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his "Lives of the Poets," is responsible for the following statement: "Shakespeare has not only shown human nature as it is, *but as it would be found in situations to which it cannot be exposed*"—a statement the absurdity of which can not fail to impress the reader.

In the King James Version of the Bible, quoted by some authorities as a standard of pure English, one may find the following, which occurs in Isaiah xxxvii. 36: "Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand; *and when they arose* early in the morning, behold *they were all dead corpses.*" It can hardly be supposed that the translators meant to imply that the corpses arose early in the morning and found themselves dead. In the second act of "Julius Cæsar," Shakespeare puts into the mouth of *Ligarius* the following: "I will strive with things impossible; yea, get the better of them." For power of perseverance *Ligarius* is to be commended. Hallam, author of the "Literature of Europe," declared that "No one as yet had exhibited the structure of the human kidneys, Vesilius having only examined them in dogs"—a declaration which implies that the dog must have bolted them whole. The London *Times* has occasionally perpetrated absurdities which equal, if they do not surpass, these. In an obituary announcing the death of Baron Dowse it said, "A great Irishman has passed away. God grant that many as great, and who shall as wisely love their country, may follow him." Here the intended wish is not that many great Irishmen may die but that there may be many to follow him who shall love their country as well as he did. An

equally absurd example taken from an issue of the *Freeman's Journal* of the year 1890, announces "The health of Mr. Parnell has lately taken a very serious turn, and *fears of his recovery* are entertained by his friends," which, one may add, was rather unfriendly on their part. Isaac Disraeli in his "Curiosities of Literature" himself was guilty of an absurdity when he wrote, "It is curious to observe the various substitutes for paper *before its invention*."

Errors of a different sort found their way even into our earlier dictionaries. Cockeram defined a lynx as "a spotted beast which hath the most perfect sight in so much as it is said that it can see through a wall." The salamander he described as "a small venomous beast with foure feet and a short taile; it lives in the fire, and at length by its extreme cold puts out the fire." Both of these definitions show the rudimentary stage of the knowledge of our forefathers in matters zoological.

Of slang no less eminent a writer of English than Richard Grant White has said, "Slang is a vocabulary of genuine words or unmeaning jargon, used always with an arbitrary and conventional signification," and because "it is mostly coarse, low, and foolish," certain slang terms and phrases have been included in the following pages, together with a few undesirable colloquialisms. These are included because the indiscriminate use of slang leads to slov-

enliness in speech. Not all slang is slovenly, incorrect, or vicious; much of it is virile, expressive, and picturesque. It is against the spread of that part of slang which is slovenly, incorrect, foolish, or vicious, that one should guard.

The purpose of these pages is not to dictate a precise course to be followed, nor to lay down rules that will prevent any speaker or writer from exercising his privilege as an individual of speaking or writing freely and independently the thoughts that are uppermost in his mind. It is, rather, to point out common errors which he may unconsciously commit, and to help him to avoid them and the vulgarisms of the street which have crept into the language, as well as those absurd blunders that have been recorded as the unconscious acts of persons qualified in other respects to rank as masters of English. To this end, and to this end only, the following vocabulary of errors in English has been compiled.

Thanks are due to the Funk & Wagnalls Company for permission to cite freely from the "Standard Dictionary of the English Language" in the following pages.

Mend your speech a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

—SHAKESPEARE, *King Lear*, Act i, Sc. 1.

A DESK-BOOK OF

ERRORS IN ENGLISH

A

a, an: Before an aspirated "h," as in "Hibernianism," the article "a" should be used. "A" is used when the next word begins with a consonant sound; "an" when it begins with a vowel or silent "h." Though never so feebly aspirated, "h" has something of a consonant sound, and the article in this case ought to conform to the general principle, as in "*a* historic introduction has generally *a* happy effect to arouse attention." To be correct one should say: *an* island, *a* Highlander; *an* oysterman, *a* hoister; *a* hotel, *an* onion; *a* herb, *an* heir; *a* house, *an* owl. Some persons do not aspirate the "h" in "herb"; when the "h" is not aspirated, the word takes the article "an," not "a."

abandon, forsake, desert: To *abandon* is to give up entirely, as home and friends, and implies previous association with responsibility for or control; to *forsake* is to leave or withdraw from a person or place, and suggests previous association with inclination or

attachment. *Abandon* and *forsake* may be used in a favorable or unfavorable sense. *Desert* is to leave permanently and especially without regard for the person or thing deserted; it is used only in an unfavorable sense and usually implies a breach of duty.

Some writers assert that *desert* is used only "of causes or persons but not of things." This is erroneous. There is ample evidence of its correct application to things; as the soldier *deserts* his colors; the sailor *deserts* his ship.

abbreviate, abridge: Discriminate carefully between these words. To *abbreviate* is to shorten a word so that a part stands for the whole; to *abridge* is to condense or epitomize, as a report, in such manner that the spirit of the original is retained though it is expressed in fewer words.

ability, capacity: These words are not exactly synonymous in meaning when used in the singular. *Ability* is bodily or mental power; *capacity* is receptive or containing power. *Ability* when used in the plural embraces both meanings.

about. Compare ALMOST.

above: Inelegantly used as a noun by ellipsis of some noun as "He wrote the *above*," for "the *above phrase*." A more objectionable use is as an adjective; as, "I submit the *above* facts" for "I submit the *above*-mentioned facts." The use of the

word "foregoing" or the more legal expression "before-mentioned" would better meet the case. Lamb, always inclined to be humorous, ridicules the expression by referring to "the *above* boys and the below boys."

above should not be used for "more than."

acceptance, acceptation: Terms sometimes used interchangeably but incorrectly so. "Acceptance" is the state of being accepted; as the *acceptance* of a position or office; *acceptation* is the favorable admission of or acquiescence in a matter, or assent to a belief.

accept of: A visitor does not *accept of* the hospitality of his host, but *accepts* his hospitality. In this phrase "of" is redundant.

accident, injury: These words are used sometimes incorrectly. An "accident" is that which happens without known or assignable cause or without deliberate intention; an "injury" is a hurt that causes physical or mental pain resulting, as from an accident. An accident may be injurious, and injuries painful; but accidents should never be spoken of as painful.

accord should not be used for *give*. To *accord* is "to render or concede as due and proper, as honor or veneration;" to *give* is "to bestow as appropriate; as to *give* thanks, praise, or welcome."

accord, award: The first of these words implies a spontaneous bestowal prompted by the dictates of the heart (Latin *cor*, *cord-*, heart); the concession or grant due to inherent merit that cannot be denied. *Award* is colder and more unimpassioned and formal, and implies a grant only after careful observation and judgment. You *accord* honor where honor is individually due, but *award* a medal to a victor out of many (actual or possible) contestants.

accord, grant: Privileges may be either *accorded* or *granted*. To *accord* is to concede as due and proper; grant; bestow; allow; to *grant* is to bestow or confer; give, as a concession; allow. Some writers erroneously restrict the meaning of *accord* to "agree with; suit."

acknowledgment: Do not spell this word *acknowledgement;* preferably it is *acknowledgment*—omit "e" after the "g."

acme. Compare CLIMAX.

acoustic (*a.*), **acoustics** (*n.*): When the adjective is used the verb must agree in number with the noun which the adjective qualifies; as, "the *acoustic* properties of this theater *are* good." But the noun though plural in form is singular in construction and always takes a verb in the singular as, "acoustics *is* a branch of physics."

acquaintance. Compare FRIEND.

acquiesce: Never use the preposition "with" after this word. You acquiesce *in* an arrangement.

act, action: Do not use one word for the other. A man does a good *act* rather than a good *action*. An *act* is accomplished by an exercise of power, whereas an *action* is the fact of exerting such power and refers to the *modus operandi*. A party to a conveyance signifies his exercise of power by the formula "This is my *act* and deed," but the course pursued, the procedure—the fact of sale and purchase—may be referred to as a *wise action*.

adherence, adhesion, attachment: These terms are no longer synonymous, although originally so. *Adherence* is used of things mental or spiritual, as principles, while *adhesion* is applied to material things. The figurative meaning of *adhere* appears in *adherence*, which is somewhat synonymous with *attachment* and applies to mental conditions or principles. *Adhesion* is generally reserved for physical attachment; as, "an *adhesion* effected by glue," although Dowden in his "Studies in Literature" (p. 230,) has written "Browning's courageous *adhesion* to truth never deserts him." Far better is Johnson's "Shakespeare's *adherence* to general nature has exposed him to the censure of critics, who form their judgments upon narrower principles."

adjective and **adverb**: In selecting the correct word to use, bear in mind that where a phrase denoting manner can be substituted an adverb is required; where some tense of the verb *to be* can be used the adjective is necessary; as, "The surgeon felt the limb *carefully* and found that one of the bones was *broken*."

admission. Compare ADMITTANCE.

admit, admit of: Very different in meaning. "This gate *admits* (affords entrance) to the grounds, but the size of the vehicle will not *admit of* (allow or permit) its passing through." Where Emerson says "Every action *admits of* being outdone," the simple *admit* could not be substituted.

admittance, admission: These words are not merely synonymous. *Admittance* refers to place, *admission* refers also to position, privilege, favor, friendship, etc. An intruder may gain *admittance* to the hall of a society who would not be allowed *admission* to its membership.

adore: Often misused as an emphatic for "like." One may *adore* that which one reveres or venerates or has profound regard or affection for, but not that which is pleasant to the palate. A child may *like* cherries and *adore* its mother, but it does not *adore* cherries though it *likes* its mother.

advantage, benefit: Exercise care in using these words. *Advantage* is that which gives one a vantage-

ground, either for coping with competitors or with difficulties, needs, or demands; as, "to have the *advantage* of a good education." It is frequently used of what one has beyond another or secures at the expense of another; as, "to have the *advantage* of another in an argument," or "to take *advantage* of another in a bargain. *Benefit* is anything that does one good.

adverbs and the infinitive "to." See SPLIT INFINITIVE.

a few. Condemned as employing the singular article before an adjective plural in sense. Usage sanctions *a hundred* and *a* great *many*, these expressions being viewed as collective. *A few* is correct idiomatic English, with a sense distinctively different from that of the adjective used alone; as, "*A few* men can be trusted" (*i. e.*, a small but appreciable number). "*Few* men can be trusted" (*i. e.*, scarcely any) is practically equivalent to the negative statement "*Most* men are *not* to be trusted."

affect. Compare EFFECT.

against: Never shorten this preposition into *again*. Such a usage is either dialectical or obsolete; and save in such usage there is no preposition *again*, or as sometimes spoken by persons careless with their speech *agen*.

aggravate, exasperate, irritate, provoke: A fever or a misfortune may be *aggravated*, but not a person.

The person is, perhaps, *exasperated* or *provoked.* To *aggravate*, from the Latin *aggravo* "to make heavy," is to intensify, and applies only to conditions of fact; *provoke*, which calls forth anger, and *exasperate*, which heightens (or roughens) anger already provoked, allude to mental states. A patient may be so *irritated* that his condition is *aggravated.* Here to *aggravate* is to make worse; to *irritate* is to annoy, provoke.

ago. Compare SINCE.

agreeable: Do not spell this word *agreable.* Its component parts are *agree* plus *able;* always double the "e" before the "a." *Agreeable* is often erroneously used for *agreeably* in correspondence. In this sense it is a commercial colloquialism, meaning "being in accordance or conformity," as with some previous action. "*Agreeable* to your request I have forwarded the goods." Correctly, this should be rendered "*Agreeably* with your request, etc.," meaning "so as to be agreeable."

agreeably. Compare AGREEABLE.

aid. Compare HELP.

ain't: Avoid as inelegant. In such a phrase as "he ain't," it is both vulgar and ungrammatical; "he isn't" is the preferred form. "The contraction *ain't* for isn't is a vulgarism which ought not to need criticism. Yet '*'tain't* so' said an educated preacher once in my hearing. The safe rule re-

specting contractions is never to use them in public speech. This is the instinct of a perfect taste." AUSTIN PHELPS, *English Style*, lecture ii. p. 25.

alienate, antagonize: *Alienate* which means "estrange," should never be used for *antagonize*, meaning "contend against" or "bring into opposition." Thus, you *alienate* your friend because you *antagonize* his views.

all. See under ANY, WHOLE, and compare UNIVERSALLY.

allege: Do not spell this word *alledge*. It has no connection whatever with *ledge*, a shelf. *Allege* is derived from the Latin *adlegio*, clear, and came to England with the Normans in the Norman French form *aligier*, Old French, *esligier*, from the Latin, *ex*, out, and *litigo*, to carry strife. It means, to assert.

alleviate, relieve: Distinguished from relieve, as *alleviate*, by lightening (Latin *ad*, to, + *levis*, light), mitigates or makes less burdensome, and *relieve*, by removing (Latin *re*, again, + *levis*, lifting up), supplies what is wanting.

Alleviation affects internal sensations, affording comparative ease, whereas *relief* operates upon external conditions, removing pain. You *alleviate* suffering and *relieve* distress or poverty.

all of them: This phrase furnishes an excellent example of the common carelessness of speech. *Of* signifies *from* or *from out;* and whereas one can

subtract a certain quantity *from* an entire number, one can hardly refer to that number as still existing, in any shape whatever, if one subtracts the whole; for *from out* implies a remainder. You may say "ship *some*, or any definite number, say *ten of them*," or "ship *them all*," but not "ship all of them."

all over the world: A common but undesirable locution for "all the world over" or "over all the world."

allow, permit: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Allow* implies no attempt at hindrance; *permit* suggests authorization to do. One *allows* that to which one interposes no objection or takes no step to prevent; one *permits* that to which one gives express consent or authorization. In some parts of the United States *allow* is used in the sense of "think, think likely, intend"; as, "he *allowed* he would go"; "he *allowed* to pay it." It is used also in the sense of *say*. Both uses are wholly inadmissible.

all right: In best usage this term is always written as two words. Formerly *alright* was in vogue, but it is now obsolete.

allude: This word is frequently used as synonymous with *mention*, but this is a careless and improper treatment of the term.

"Allude is in danger of losing its peculiar signification, which is delicate and serviceable . . . . (It) means to

indicate jocosely, to hint at playfully . . . . Allusion is the by-play of language."—R. G. WHITE *Words and Their Uses*, ch. 5, p. 90. (S. H. & Co. '70)

Allude is from the Latin *alludo*, treat lightly, from *ad*, at, and *ludo*, play, and should be used only with the sense of "to refer incidentally, indirectly, or by suggestion." When you toast a hero by name, you certainly do not allude to him, although in so doing you make a pretty allusion to the heroic act with which his name is identified. In toasting Dewey, you do not allude to him but to his deeds off Manila.

allusion: Distinguish between this word and *illusion*. The former is derived from the Latin *ad*, at, + *ludo*, play (treat lightly), and means an incidental suggestion or passing reference, a species of innuendo; the latter is derived from *in*, on, + *ludo*, play (play tricks on), and means an unreal image presented to the senses.

almost: "An adjective in early English, the use of which has recently been revived, but it has not received the sanction of general usage." — STANDARD DICTIONARY.

An "*almost* Christian" is, however, a most expressive term, and would oftentimes more nearly express the truth than the absolute and unqualified "Christian." Compare MOST.

almost, about: These words are now commonly used as interchangeable synonyms. Formerly, such

use was condemned. One may say of a task that it is "*almost* completed" or that it is "*about* completed" meaning that it is nearly accomplished or approaches closely to a completed state.

already: Although this word consists of two elements "all" and "ready," it is not correctly spelled with two "l's" but *already*.

also, likewise: According to some writers *also* merely denotes addition, and *likewise* denotes connection with some person or thing that has previously been referred to. *Likewise*, which means "in like manner," of necessity refers to states and conditions which are susceptible of manner, and should not be used indiscriminately for *also*, which properly connects facts and qualities. There is, for example, a considerable difference between the expressions "He spoke *also*" and "He spoke *likewise*." In the second case, the matter of speech may be considered to have been to the same effect as the speech first alluded to. Lexicographers do not recognize this difference.

In practise, the choice between these words is largely to secure euphony and avoid repetition. *Also* and *likewise* affirm that what is added is like that to which it is added. — STANDARD DICTIONARY, p. 59.

alternative: "This word means a choice—one choice—between two things. Yet popular usage has

so corrupted it, that it is now commonly applied to the things themselves, and not to the choice between them, as 'You may take either *alternative*,' 'I was forced to choose between two *alternatives*.' And, indeed, some people go so far as to say 'several *alternatives* were presented him.'"—E. S. GOULD, *Good English, Misused Words*, p. 45.

alway, all ways: Discriminate carefully between these terms. *Always* means "during all time"; *all ways* means "in every way."

amateur, novice: These terms are not synonymous. The distinction between them is that an *amateur* may be the equal in skill of a professional, but a *novice* is a beginner, and as such does not equal the professional in skill.

ambidextrous: Do not spell this word "*ambidexterous*." It is derived from the Latin *dextra*, the right hand, and *ous*. Although the form *ambidexterous* was common in England in the nineteenth century, it is not now in use.

ambition should not be used to signify mild energy as it imports persistent and inordinate or steadfast desire. "The heat leaves me without *ambition* for work" illustrates an altogether wrong use of the word.

amid, among: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Amid* denotes position when one object is surrounded by others from which it differs in nature or characteristics; *among* denotes an intermingling

of objects of the same nature. A man may be *amid* enemies but not *among* them; he may be *among* friends but not *amid* them.

among, between: *Among* may apply to any number; *between* applies to two only.

among one another: A pleonasm. Say, rather, "*among themselves*."

among the rest: Say "*among them* was he," or "*with the rest* was he"—not *among the rest*. As "the rest" specifically excludes himself, it is impossible for him to figure in the midst of them.

amount, number: *Amount* is used of substances in mass; *number* refers to the individuals of which such mass is constituted.

an: Modern practice does not permit of the use of *an* before words beginning with an aspirated "h" as, "hair," "hall," "harangue," "hero," "history," "historical," "historian," "house," "hypothesis," "heraldic," etc. However, it may be correctly used before words in which the initial "h" is not aspirated. Compare A, AN.

ancient, antiquated: Anything *antiquated* is *ancient* but not all things that are *ancient* are *antiquated;* thus *ancient* refers to things that existed in oiden times; *antiquated* to things obsolete or that have fallen behind the times.

and, (the relative preceded by): Where "and" is used to connect two clauses the clauses must be of

similar construction. Therefore, do not say, "I met Florence on Wednesday, *and which* was very pleasing to me," which is not only grammatically incorrect, but is faulty in that it introduces an altogether useless word. Omit the "and."

and, to: These terms are not interchangeable. One does not "try *and* do a task," but "one tries *to* do it."

anger. Compare TEMPER.

angry. Compare MAD.

angry at, with: A man may be angry *at* or *about* a hurt, never *with* it; he is angry *at* rather than *with* a dog. We may be angry *with* a person.

annoyed at, by, with: Note the correct use of the prepositions. "He will be annoyed *at* or *by* complaints" (if they are made); "He will be annoyed *with* complaints" (because they will surely be made).

another from: Misused for *another than;* as, "judges of quite *another* stamp *from* his Majesty's judges of Assize," for "of quite *another* stamp *than*," etc.

another such: These words should be used always in this order. Avoid "*such another* mistake," as incorrect; "*another such* mistake" is better.

answer, reply: Discriminate carefully between these words. The Standard Dictionary, quoting Crabb says, "an *answer* is made to a question; a

reply is made to an assertion;" but, it continues, "this statement is too limited, as an *answer* is made to a charge as well as to a question. . . . A *reply* is an unfolding, and implies both thought and intelligence. *Reply* implies the formal dissection of a statement previously made; *answer*, a ready return of words to a question or charge that is made."

antagonize, veto, oppose, forbid: *Antagonize* is distinguished from *veto* or *oppose*. In the sense of "neutralize" or "deprive of active power" you may *antagonize* a disease, while you *oppose* or *veto* a bill. To *forbid* is to prohibit with authority; to *veto* is to forbid authoritatively, with or without the right to do so. Compare ALIENATE.

ante-, anti-: Discriminate carefully between these prefixes. *Ante-* means "before;" *anti-* means "opposite to." *Ante*diluvian means "before the flood"; *Anti*christ means "opposed to Christ."

anticipate, expect, hope: As anticipate implies "expectation with confidence and pleasure," never use it where mere expectation is meant, which applies to that which we have good reason to believe will happen. "I *hope* for a visit from my friend, though I have no word from him; I *expect* it, when he writes that he is coming; and as the time draws near I *anticipate* it," for I look forward to it with confidence and pleasure.

antiquated. Compare ANCIENT.

any, all, at all: Avoid using *any* adverbially in place of the adjective. Don't say "Did you sleep *any?*" when you mean "Did you have *any* sleep?" or "Did you sleep *at all?*"

Since *any* individualizes or separates, signifying one or some out of a certain quantity or number, and thus differentiating from the whole or entire quantity or number, the word should not be used interchangeably with *all.* "He is the finest fellow of *all*" (not of *any*=of *any one fellow*) I have known."

any, either: *Any* is used of more than two; *either* of two only. Do not say "the United States or *either* of them," say, rather, "*any* of them."

anyhow, anyway: "Forcible colloquial expressions often used to indicate that something is to be done, admitted, believed, or the like, be the circumstances, results or conditions what they may; as '*Anyhow*, I have lost it;' '*anyway*, I am going.' In place of these, such expressions as 'In any event,' 'At any rate,' 'Be that as it may' are ordinarily preferred."—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

any place, some place: "He won't go *any place*;" "I want to go *some place.*" Say, rather, "He won't go *anywhere*;" "I want to go *somewhere.*" These are solecisms, unfortunately common, which should be avoided. "Place" may be used as an indirect object only when preceded by a preposition.

anyway, anywhere: Frequently misspelled *anyways*, *anywheres*. These words should never be written with a final *s*.

apostasy: In modern usage the last syllable is spelled with an *s*. The alternative spelling, *apostacy*, though occasionally used, is not preferred.

apparent, evident, manifest: Do not confound *apparent* with *evident*, because what is *apparent* may or may not be *evident*. That is *apparent* which appears to be, as *apparent* sincerity; but appearances may be false. Things are not always what they seem. "That is *evident* of which the mind is made sure by some inference that supplements the fact of perception. That is *manifest* which we can lay the hand upon: *manifest* is thus stronger than *evident*, as touch is more absolute than sight." See HEIR.

appear, seem: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Appear* refers to that which manifests itself to the senses; *seem* applies to that which is manifest to the mind on reflection. *Seem* gives or creates the impression of being. A man may *seem* honest but cannot *appear* so.

appreciate: This verb has the intransitive sense of "to increase in value," despite the fact that some critics (though without justifiable cause) object to its use in such a phrase as "real estate *appreciates* as the city grows."

apprehend, comprehend: These terms are neither synonymous nor interchangeable. To *apprehend* is to perceive; to *comprehend* is to understand.

approach: Sometimes incorrectly used for *address*, *petition*, etc. One is *approached* by indirect or covert intimation, suggestion, or question, which he may encourage if he will, or may put aside without formal refusal. *Approach* is often used in a bad sense, implying the use of bribery or intrigue. Do not say "the teachers have *approached* the Educational Department for longer intermissions," when you mean "the teachers have *petitioned*," etc.

apt, likely: Words sometimes misapplied. *Apt* implies natural fitness or tendency; *likely* applies to a contingent event considered as very probable.

aren't: For *are not* when the subject follows; as, "Aren't you?" "Aren't they?" The best conversational usage contracts the verb when the subject precedes: "we're not," "you're not," etc. Similarly we say "I'm not," "I'll not."

argue. Compare AUGUR.

arraign at, before, for, on, after: "The criminal was arraigned *at* the court" is incorrect; a criminal is arraigned *at* the bar; *before* the court; *for* a crime; *on* an indictment; *after* the discovery of his crime.

articles: Two or more words connected by *and* referring to different things should each be preceded

by the article; but when they denote the same thing, the article is commonly used with the first only. "*The* black-and-white horse" would denote one horse marked with the two colors black and white. "*The* black *and the* white horse" would denote two horses, one black and the other white.

as . . . as, so . . . as. The STANDARD DICTIONARY says: A shade of difference in their meanings, as strictly used in comparisons, is often neglected. *So . . . as* suggests that, in the comparison of the persons or things mentioned, there is present in the mind of the speaker a consciousness of a considerable degree of the quality considered; *as . . . as* does not carry this impression. In "John is not *as* tall *as* James" there is no implication that the speaker regards either John or James as tall; there is merely a comparison of their heights. So, too, in "John is not *as* old *as* James" there is merely a comparison of ages. But if one says, "John is not *so* tall *as* James," though the *so* is not emphasized, there is understood usually to be a reference more or less distinct to something uncommon in the height of James as compared with the stature of other men or of other boys of his age; the speaker regards James as being *tall*. "John is not *so* old *as* James" suggests that, in some relation or other, James is thought of as being *old;* as in "James is taller than John." "Yes, but my boy is not *so old as* yours."

In affirmative sentences *so . . . as* can not properly be used except in certain restricted constructions, and where the quality referred to is to be emphasized. It occurs oftenest in sentences that, though affirmative in form, carry a negative suggestion; as, "*So* good a cook *as* Polly is hard to find," that is, "It is not easy to find *so* good a cook *as* Polly.

> Few knights of the shire [in the 17th century] had libraries *so* good *as* may now perpetually be found in a servants' hall.
>
> MACAULAY, *History*, ch. 3.

That is, "not many knights of the shire," etc. In a simple affirmative comparison like "Jane is *as* good a cook *as* Polly," *so . . . as* is not used.

In interrogative sentences, as in negative sentences, a consciousness more or less distinct of a considerable degree of the quality referred to is conveyed by *so . . . as*, but not by *as . . . as*. "Is John *as* old *as* James?" and "Is your uncle *so* old *as* my father?" convey different impressions as to what the speaker means by *old*. In the question where *as . . . as* is used there is no implication of considerable age in *old*.

as far as, so far as: Discriminate carefully between these terms. *As far as* expresses distance; *so far as* expresses limitation, as of one's knowledge. Therefore, "*so far as* I know" is preferable to "*as far as* I know."

as if. Compare LIKE.

as, so: Discriminate between these words; *as* is used in comparing persons or things of approximate caliber or size; *so* when the comparison is unequal.

as, that: Discriminate carefully between these words. *As* is often improperly used for *that*. Do not say "not *as* I know of"; "I do not know *as* I shall go." Say, rather, "Not *that* I know of"; "I do not know *that* I shall go."

ascent must be distinguished from **assent**, its homonym. The former is derived from Latin *ad*, to, + *scando*, climb, and means the act of climbing; the latter is from Latin *ad*, to, + *sentio*, feel, and means expression of concurrence in a proposition, acquiescence.

aside: An Americanism for *apart*. Not "auxiliary words *aside*," but "auxiliary words *apart*."

asparagus. Compare SPARROW GRASS.

assent. Compare ASCENT.

assume, perform, discharge: We *assume* responsibilities to *perform* a task and thus *discharge* our duty. Duties are not performed.

astonish, surprise: Terms which some writers claim are not synonymous or interchangeable, but usage has made them so. To *astonish* is "to affect with wonder and *surprise*"; to *surprise* is "to strike with *astonishment* by some unexpected act or event."

Obviously, when one says, "I am surprised," he uses an expression exactly equivalent to "I am

struck with astonishment," which is the equivalent of "I am astonished."

at: Commonly but erroneously used for *to*, as an intensive in such phrases as "Where have you been *at*?" "Where are you going *at*?" Used also occasionally to denote place: as, "Where does he live *at*?" Wherever used in such connections the word is redundant.

at all: These words, supposed to have an intensive effect, are frequently unnecessarily introduced. "It doesn't rain *at all*," would be just as expressive if written "It doesn't rain."

at auction: In England this expression is known as an Americanism. There, goods are put up *to* auction and are sold *by* it—that is *by* offering them to the highest bidder. "*At* private sale" also is peculiar to America.

at best: An erroneous form for "at *the* best."

at, in: Always *in* a country; either *at* or *in* a city, town, or village; *at*, if the place is regarded as a point; *in*, if it is inclusive; as, "We arrived *at* Paris;" "He lives *in* London."

at length: The assumption that *at length* means the same as **at last**, and is therefore superfluous, is an error. Both *at length* and *at last* presuppose long waiting; but *at last* views what comes after the waiting as a finality; *at length* views it as intermediate with reference to action or state that continues, or

to results that are yet to follow; as, "I have invited him often, and *at length* he is coming"; "I have invited him often, and *at last* he has come."

At length is used also of space; as, "He wrote me *at length*" (that is, fully or in detail). *At last* is used of time; as, "He came back *at last*."

at that: A vulgarism of speech, sometimes defended on the ground that the phrase is elliptical, the omitted word or phrase being computation, showing, or feature of the case. Avoid the usage, however.

at you: As a substitute for *with you* this is an unpardonable vulgarism, as in the sentence "I am angry *at* (for *with*) you."

audience, spectator: An *audience* is a number of persons assembled to listen to a play, lecture, debate, etc.; a *spectator* is an eye-witness as of a pageant, panorama, etc.

aught, ought: The former means anything whatever, any (even the smallest) part; the latter, as a noun, is a corruption of *naught*, a cipher. *Naught* is of course *not aught*, that is, not anything, thus nothing, and hence the figure 0, a cipher. Careful speakers do not replace this word by *ought*.

augur: With the sense of *betoken* or *portend*, this word must not be confounded with *argue*. The racecourse may *augur*, but certainly does not *argue* poverty.

authentic, authoritative, genuine: Often misused as synonymous terms. That which accords with the facts and comes from the source alleged is *authentic;* that which has the character represented and is true to its own claims is *genuine;* that which possesses or emanates from proper authority and is entitled to acceptance as such is *authoritative.*

Trench in "On the Study of Words" (p. 189), says: "A *genuine* work is one written by the author whose name it bears; an *authentic* work is one which relates truthfully the matters of which it treats." And an *authoritative* work is one which contains the results of the observations and conclusions of an author of special ability in subjects of which he is an acknowledged master.

auxiliary: In this word the letter "*l*" is never doubled.

avails: An Americanism for *profits* or *proceeds.*

averse from, averse to: Originally *averse from* was commonly used to designate the turning from a subject, as from repugnance. Present usage prefers *averse to,* denoting aversion in the sense of hostility toward the subject.

avocation, vocation: Discriminate carefully between these words. An *avocation* is that which takes one from his regular calling. It is a minor or irregular occupation. The term is used loosely, sometimes by good writers, for *vocation,* which signi-

fies the main calling or business of life. An *avocation* is a diversion.

award. Compare ACCORD.

aware. Compare CONSCIOUS.

awful, awfully: *Awful* should not be used of things which are merely disagreeable or annoying, nor in the sense of excessive, exceedingly bad, great, or the like. It is sometimes incorrectly used to designate surprise or distress, as, an *awful* mouth, that is, a mouth of surprising size. Do not say "He created an *awful* scene," when you mean that the scene he created was *distressing*. Things cannot be "*awfully* nice" nor persons "*awfully* jolly," notwithstanding the sanction of colloquial usage. Phelps relates the following: "Two travelers at Rome once criticized Michael Angelo's statue of Moses. 'Is it not *awful?*' said one. 'Yes,' answered the other, 'it is *sublime.*' 'No, no!' rejoined the other, 'I meant *awfully* ugly!'" That is *awful* only which inspires awe.

aye, ay: Meaning always, ever, and pronounced ê (e, as in eight), is to be distinguished from *aye*, meaning yes, and pronounced ai (ai, as in aisle).

B

back on, go. Compare GO.

back or **back up**, with the signification of *uphold* or *support* has the countenance of high authority, but

is still, except in the sporting sense, regarded as savoring of slang.

back down: A colloquialism for *withdraw* as from an argument, a position, or contest.

back out: A colloquialism for to *withdraw* from or refuse to carry out an agreement.

back talk: A vulgarism for any impertinent reply; as, "Don't give me any *back talk.*" Persons of refinement say, "Don't be impertinent," or, "stop your impertinence."

bad: This word is the antithesis of *good* and embraces various degrees of wickedness or evil as well as those of unsatisfactoriness. *Bad* is a term often misapplied. One may say "a *bad* boy," "a *bad* egg," but not a "*bad* accident"; say rather, "a *serious* accident." In referring to things which are necessarily *bad,* or the reverse of good, select some less pleonastic adjective. An *acute,* a *severe* or *gnawing* pain would be preferable expressions to a *bad* pain.

bad egg: An undesirable expression used colloquially to designate a worthless person: not used in polite society.

bad grammar: This phrase has been condemned as false syntax by some persons unfamiliar with the different meanings of the word *bad.* The phrase is not only good English but is cited by the STANDARD DICTIONARY as a correct example under the word

bad to illustrate the meaning "containing errors or faults; incorrect; as *bad grammar.*"

badly: This word should never be used for *greatly* or for *exceedingly, very much,* etc. Do not say "Your father will miss you *badly*"; say rather, ". . . will miss you greatly." Instead of "I wanted that *badly*" say "I wanted that *very much*" or "I was in *great* need of that." "The carpet needs to be beaten *badly*" is a ludicrous blunder for "The carpet *badly* (or very much) needs to be beaten"—the construction connecting *badly* with *beating* rather than with *needs* which it qualifies.

balance, remainder: These terms are not synonymous. A bookkeeper obtains a *balance* as by addition or subtraction. A mathematician deducts a smaller sum from a greater and obtains a *remainder.* Do not say "The *balance* of the evening was devoted to music," but "the *rest* of the evening. . ."

ball up (to), is slang for "confuse," "embarrass" either of which is to be preferred.

baluster: Compare BANISTER.

band, beat the. Compare BEAT.

banister is a corrupt form of *baluster* which is one of the individual pillars which unite to form a *balustrade.*

banquet: This word designating a sumptuous feast in honor of some person or event should not be used as the synonym of "dinner" or "supper," which both designate less formal functions.

bare in the sense of uncover must be differentiated from its homonym *bear*, to suffer or endure.

base, bass: Discriminate carefully between these terms. *Base* means the bottom or support of anything, that part on which it rests; also, that which is low. *Base* is sometimes used in the sense of *found;* as, "he *based* his argument on the evidence." In chemistry it is a compound which unites with acid to form a salt. *Bass* is the name of various sea-fishes; also the name of a tree and of things made from its fiber. In music the *bass* consists of the lowest tones in the scale, instrumental or vocal.

bat: Formerly a provincialism but now a vulgarism for "wink." Do not say "Quit *batting* your eyes at me;" say rather, that is, if you must say anything of the kind, "Stop winking at me."

bathos and **pathos** are sometimes separated by only a fine line, and it may be rather a matter of intelligence than of philology that fails to make use of the desirable term. *Pathos* is from the Greek *pascho*, suffer, and designates the quality that awakens the tender emotions, as compassion or sympathy; *bathos* is from the Greek *bathys*, deep, and signifies a ridiculous descent from the lofty to the depths of commonplace.

battalion: In this word the "t" is always doubled, as in *battle*, from which it is derived; it is, however, correctly spelled with only one "l."

bear. See BARE.

beastly: A British colloquialism expressive of disgust or contempt; as, "This is *beastly* weather"; sometimes even used adverbially; as, "I was *beastly* tired." This locution, essentially in bad taste, though often affected by college students and others who should know better, seems never to be defensible except in the phrase "*beastly* drunk," and even this is objectionable as being a libel on the beast. Compare NASTY.

beat should not be used for "defeat."

beat it should not be used for "go away" or "clear out."

beat the band: A vulgarism for "to surpass or be immeasurably superior to."

because: Although this word means "for the reason" it is often used in the same sentence with this expression—"The reason why I do this is *because* (=for the reason that) I please myself by doing it." Substitute *that* for *because*.

because why: A term common among the illiterate. *Because* is used correctly when it precedes the explanation of an act; *why*, when used interrogatively. Do not say "I did it, *because why*"; here omit "why" and continue with the reason for the act. Instead of "I did not come sooner; *because why*?" "I was delayed." Say "I did not come sooner; why? I was delayed."

beef is coarse slang for "boast" or "brag."

begin: *Commence* is frequently substituted for *begin* work where the change should not be made. *Begin* is applied to order of time; *commence* relates to the work on hand with reference to its subsequent completion. The man who strikes the first blow *begins* a fight, but both parties to a law suit *commence* litigation at the moment when they severally undertake the first step.

begin by him: This is incorrect; say, "begin *with* him."

behave: Strictly means "comport." When used with a reflexive pronoun as, "Behave *yourself*," this word is correctly applied. When the pronoun is omitted as, "Will you *behave?*" the sentence is incomplete and the expression a mere colloquialism.

being: The phrases "is *being* built," "was *being* built," and kindred forms of English imperfects passive are condemned by certain critics as recent and unwarranted; Fitzedward Hall points out that they are neither recent nor unwarranted, and have been used by the best writers for a century. He says: "Prior to the evolution of *is being built* and *was being built*, we possessed no discriminate equivalents of *ædificatur* and *ædificabatur; is built* and *was built*, by which they were rendered, corresponding exactly to *ædificatus est* and *ædificatus erat*."—*Modern English*, App., p. 350.

Is growing, was growing, indicate an activity from within; as, the tree *is growing* (from its own internal forces); *is being grown, was being grown*, the activity of some agent from without; as, the plant *is being grown* (by the gardener). So also, and strikingly, *is bleeding* (as from a wound), and *is being bled* (as by a surgeon).

belong: Used absolutely; as, "He doesn't *belong*," "We all *belong*" (*sc.*, to this organization, society, community, or in the place, sphere, or associations where actually present): recent in the United States, and apparently rapidly spreading in popular use, though with no literary support.

beneficence, benevolence: Although formerly the meanings of these words were distinct they are not so any longer, and *benevolence* now includes *beneficence*. "*Beneficence*, the quality of being beneficent or charitable: *benevolence* is the disposition to seek the well-being or comfort of others; charitableness." According to the etymology and original usage *beneficence* is the doing well, *benevolence*, the wishing or willing well to others; but *benevolence* has come to include *beneficence* and to displace it. We should not now speak of *benevolence* which did not help.

benefit. Compare ADVANTAGE.

bequest, devise, legacy: These words are not exactly synonymous. A *bequest* is a leaving by will of personal property of any kind; a *devise* is a gift of

land by a last will and testament; a *legacy* is personal property bequeathed. *Devise* is sometimes used loosely for any testamentary disposition of property but, applied strictly, refers specifically to land, whereas *legacy* applies to any kind of personal property.

berth, birth: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Berth*, which is probably derived from *bear*, (Anglo-Saxon *beran*, carry), means a place of accommodation, whether as bunk or bed, apartment, or engagement. *Birth*, similarly pronounced and derived, means "a coming into existence."

beside, besides: Much confusion exists, and has long existed regarding these words. Gould, who in his work on "Good English" explained the use of these terms in 1856, from which Webster borrowed in 1876, states that "besides is always a preposition and only a preposition." This is not so. It is sometimes an adverb when used in its prepositional sense of "by the side (of)."

Of *besides* as a preposition, Skeat, in his "Etymological Dictionary," says:—"The more correct form is *beside;* 'besides' is a later development, due to the habit of using the suffix -es to form adverbs; the use of *besides* as a preposition, is, strictly incorrect, but is as old as the 12th century."

Beside is also a preposition in the sense of "in comparison with" and "physically or mentally remote from." "*Beside* your work his is poor"; "*Beside*

the point at issue"; "The poor fellow is *beside* himself." *Besides* as a preposition means "in addition to" or "except." "*Besides* wealth he had health"; "*Besides* death he knew no fear." As an adverb it means "moreover" or "other than." "*Besides*, it is late"; "He was heedless of all the world *besides*." *Beside*, then, conveys the idea of conjunction, separation or comparison; whereas *besides* implies addition or exception.

between. Compare AMONG.

between you and I: This is incorrect. Both pronouns are objects of the preposition *between* and should be in the objective case; say "*between you and me.*" Compare YOU AND I.

bevy: A word sometimes misapplied. It is applied correctly to a company of girls, a flock of birds, as, quail, grouse, or larks; also to a small herd of deer or heifers.

big, great: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Big* is not synonymous with *great*. A man may be physically *big* but is not necessarily *great* mentally. Emerson was mentally a *great* man, and although tall physically he was not a *big* man. *Big* and *large* are synonymous, but while *big* is more emphatic, *large* is a more refined or elegant term.

big-bug: A slang term used to denote a person of consequence, actual or self-imagined. Say rather, "A prominent" or, "an important man."

big-wig : A slang term common in England for a person in authority or of prominence. Compare BIG-BUG.

bird : In the phrase "You're a bird" an inane and, therefore, undesirable expression.

bit : Primarily a *bite*, a small *piece*, or by extension a small quantity; as, a *bit* of bread, a *bit* of fun. By error, the word is sometimes applied to liquids; as, "there is not a *bit* of water on the farm." But when reference is to liquid to be drunk, it is more discriminating to say, not a *bit*, but a *sip*.

blame on : Indefensible slang. We blame a person *for* a fault, or lay the blame *upon* him. Not, as in a New York newspaper, after the last Presidential election, "I do not *blame* the defeat *on* the President," but "I do not *blame* the President *for* the defeat," or "I do not *lay the blame . . . upon*," etc.

blow : A colloquialism for boastful talk, which is expressed less coarsely but with as much force by "bluster" or "brag."

blowhard : A coarse term for "boaster" synonymous with windbag; not used by persons of refinement. Compare WINDBAG.

boiled shirt : A slang phrase designating a white linen shirt. It originated in the Western States of America but its use is widespread among persons addicted to careless diction.

boost, to : A vulgarism for "to assist" : used also as a noun, as "He gave me a *boost* in business" for "He assisted me. . . ."

borne, the past participle of *bear,* must not be confounded with the adjective **born.** "Man is *born* to sorrow, which may or may not be well *borne.*"

both : When *both* is used in a negative sentence, the meaning intended is sometimes doubtful. "*Both* applicants were not accepted." Were both applicants rejected? Or, was one rejected and the other accepted? Or, was neither applicant accepted or rejected? A similar confusion of sense occurs in some negative sentences containing *all,* when *not* is misplaced; this practically contradicts the sense intended, or makes it ambiguous; as, *all* will not go, that is, *not all* will go—meaning some will and some will not go. "*All* were not of that mind" (probably) *not all* were of that mind, or (possibly) *all* were of a different mind or minds from the one spoken of. So, also, when all is used substantively. "*All* that glisters is not gold"—*not all* that glisters is gold. A peculiarity of *both* is that it can not be negatived by connecting *not* immediately with it, except elliptically in sentences of unusual form that are obviously arranged for the prevention of misunderstanding—as in correcting the doubtful meaning of the sentence cited above, "*Both* applicants were not accepted." If one asks, in order to clear its confu-

sing impression, "Were *both* rejected?" the reply may properly be, "*Not both* were rejected; one was rejected and one accepted"—a connection of *not* with *both* that is usually inadmissible. The confusion in meaning of a negative sentence containing *both* will be best avoided by making the sentence affirmative; "*Both* applicants were rejected," "One of the two applicants was rejected and the other accepted," etc.—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

both: As an adjective or pronoun *both* emphasizes the idea of *two*. It has been well defined as "the two, and not merely one of them"; it can not properly, therefore, be connected with or refer to more than two objects. As a conjunction, however, *both* has a more extended meaning and employment than it has as an adjective or a pronoun; thus, it is permissible to say, "He lost all his live stock—*both* horses, cows, and sheep." *Both*, as so used, emphasizes the extent or comprehensiveness of the assertion. The use has been challenged, but has abundant literary authority, and antedates Chaucer.

both alike: A pleonasm. Two things may be *alike* but *alike* should not be used as an adjective. *Both* daughters may be *like* their mother, but to say they are *both alike*, meaning that they resemble each other, is incorrect. *Both* should never be used with *alike*.

bounce: A colloquialism for "discharge" or "eject forcibly," an apt rather than an elegant term.

bound : This word may be the participial adjective of *buā*, prepare, or the past participle of *bindan*, bind. The words should not be confused. "I am *bound* to have it:" yes, if constrained or compelled; but no, if merely resolved. It is true that in the United States a colloquial usage to this effect has become popular, but it is none the less an error of speech.

bountiful, plentiful : *Bountiful* which originally meant "generous in bestowing gifts" has gradually come to mean "showing abundance," "yielding in plenty." In the latter sense it is synonymous with *plentiful*.

bourne : From the French *borne*, bourne (Latin *bodina*, limit), means that which marks the end, and hence the end or goal. It does not mean *country* which it is so often supposed to mean—presumedly from Hamlet's "undiscovered country, from whose *bourne* no traveller returns." Readers who on this authority construe *bourne* as country make the mistake of substituting the word "which" for the phrase "whose" bourne.

brand-new often incorrectly written *bran-new*. The original and etymologically correct form of this word is *brand-new*, from *brand*, meaning "fire" or "burning," and *new* meaning "fresh"—the "fire-new" of Shakespeare (Twelfth Night, act. iii., sc. 2) is best explained by his own words, "fire-new from the mint," meaning "fresh and bright" like a new

coin, as being newly come from the fire and forge. *Bran-new* is a colloquialism.

brand of Cain: By a peculiar perversion of facts, this is invariably referred to as a stigma similar to the scarlet letter with which Hester Prynne was indeed branded. But the brand was an act of mercy and "a token of Divine protection," for "the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should slay him."

bravery, courage: Inasmuch as the courageous may be without *bravery* and the brave without *courage* a careful discrimination should always be made in the use of these terms. *Courage* is rather a virtue of the mind, whereas *bravery* is temperamental. Your *courage* may ooze out, as it were, at the palms of your hands, but bravery which is instinctive, remains. For this reason bravery may often be misplaced, true *courage*—which ever seeks to do the right thing at the right time, regardless of results—never.

bred and born: An erroneous sequence of words. One is *born* before one is *bred*; therefore say "*born and bred.*"

brevity, conciseness: Words sometimes misused. *Brevity* is commonly applied to shortness of time, but it has the sanction of literary usage for *conciseness* or condensation of language into few words. A speech may be *concise* yet comprehensive; that is, it may cover the entire range of a subject in few

words and as such be characterized by *conciseness;* another may be short in duration, the theme being one that does not permit of expansion and as such be characterized by *brevity.*

bring, carry, fetch: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Bring* expresses motion toward some person, place, or thing, and implies to bear from a distant place to one nearer; *carry* expresses motion away from; *fetch* expresses motion from a given place to another, as for the purpose of obtaining some article, and return to the given place with the article required. *Go and fetch* is pleonastic.

Britannia: This word is often misspelled "Brittannia." It is from Britain and should be spelled with only one "t" but two "n's."

broach, brooch: Discriminate carefully between these terms. Although both are derived from the same source etymologically (Latin, *broca*, a spike) they are now widely different in meaning. A *broach* may mean "a boring into an opening, a spit, or a spire." It is also the name of the boring bits or drills used in carpentering or engineering. It means also "to approach any one in conversation" on some particular subject. A *brooch* is "a breastpin or an ornamental pin or clasp used as for display or to fasten some part of a dress."

broke: A word often misused for "broken." Do not say "I'm *broke*" say rather "broken"—**To go**

broke: A colloquial phrase common in commercial circles for "to become bankrupt." These terms are avoided by persons who cultivate a refined diction.

brothers: Distinguished from **brethren.** The one applies to those who are *brothers* by birth, whereas the other indicates fraternal relationship in some order or society.

building, being built: There are advocates of either form. Fitzedward Hall has shown conclusively that "is being built" has been used by the best writers for a century or more, and now has universal literary sanction. Richard Whately, George P. Marsh, Richard Grant White, and other critics have strenuously objected to this use. In literature there is support enough for their views: Milton wrote "while the Temple of the Lord *was building.*" Dr. Johnson, in writing to Boswell, of his *Lives of the Poets* said "My 'Lives' *are reprinting;*" Macaulay followed the same style and wrote "Chelsea Hospital *was building*"; "while innocent blood *was* shedding." *Being* has a special modern use with passive forms of verbs to express progressive action. For example, is, are, or *was being* built, expresses what is expressed also by is, are, or *was building*, *a-building*, or *in building*. Both forms are permissible, but "is *being built*" is more frequently heard and, perhaps, preferable.

building, construction: Alfred Ayres (*Some Ill-used Words*, p. 44) quotes the following example of the misuse of these words: "These two advisory bodies have recommended the *building* of battleships. It is understood that Mr. Long is opposed to the *construction* [constructing] of any armorclads." Mr. Ayres points out that if *building* is correct—and it is—then *construction* is incorrect and the correct word to use is *constructing*.

bum: A vulgar term for "an idle, dissolute fellow; a loafer,"—**on the bum.** A vulgar phrase used to denote that that to which it is applied is of poor quality, badly done, or has been subjected to careless treatment.

busted: A slang term for financially broken, not used by persons accustomed to a refined diction. Compare BROKE.

but, however: Discriminate carefully between these words. Do not say "He is suffering—not, *however*, acutely;" say rather, "He is suffering, *but* not acutely."

but that: Implies a negative, but when it follows another negative phrase (as "I *don't know but that* I did it") it suggests the positive or, as in the example given above, the likelihood or possibility that some act has been done. Locutions of this kind should be avoided as inelegant, say rather "I may have done it."

but what : This is equivalent to *but that which* and is an incorrect expression for *but that.* "I am not sure *but what* I shall be there" should be written *but that,* and indicates the possibility or even probability of being there; but note that if the *but* be omitted from the latter (and correct) usage, the indication is the reverse. Compare BUT THAT.

but yet : Should not be used when either *but* or *yet* is sufficient by itself; as, "Wealth may seek us; *but* wisdom must be sought"; not *but yet.* When, however, Archbishop Trench says, "*But yet* these pains hand us over to true pleasures" (*Study of Words,* p. 232), each conjunction has its distinct adversative sense. This appears still more clearly in "Ye are but common men, *but* [on the contrary] *yet* [notwithstanding that fact] ye think with minds not common." —COLERIDGE *Wallenstein* 2, 3.

bute : A vulgar corruption of "beauty" used by illiterates; as, "She's a *bute.*" Correctly "She is a beauty" or "a beautiful woman."

butt in, to : A vulgar although expressive phrase meaning "to interfere officiously or inquisitively with," not used by persons accustomed to refined diction.

by : Properly used before the agent or doer; *with* before the instrument or means; as, "He was killed *by* the assassin *with* a dagger." But active forces are often thought of as agents, so that we properly

say "The house was destroyed *by* fire." "His friends were displeased *by* the selection of another chairman" means that the action displeased them; "his friends were displeased *with* the selection," etc., means that the man selected was not their choice.

"A gentleman *by* the name of Hinkley."

"Oh, no! You mean 'A gentleman *of* the name of Hinkley.' This is English, you know."

One may say "I know no one *of* the name of Brown," or "I know no one *by* the name of Brown"; but the meaning is different. One might know a man *of* the name of Brown, but know him *by* the name of Smith. It is better to say simply "a man named Brown."—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

C

cabbage for "steal or "crib," as from a pony, is schoolboy slang.

cake, takes the: A slang equivalent for "wins the prize." Used usually to designate that the person, act, or statement to which it is applied exceeds in impudence anything within the knowledge of the persons present.

calculate: The verb signifies to ascertain by mathematical or scientific computation; and the word *calculated* therefore strictly means adapted by calculation. It is then illogical to speak of "measures *calculated* to do harm" when the measures were in

fact designated for a specific purpose—that of doing good.

calligraphy and **cacography** respectively mean good and bad writing. It is therefore pleonastic to speak of excellent *calligraphy* or wretched *cacography;* and to describe the former as wretched would simply be to say that at the same time it was both excellent and the reverse.

cameo: The plural of the word is not formed by adding "-es" as in "potato" or "grotto" but by the adding of "-s"; as, *cameos.*

can: Misused for *may*. *Can* always refers to some form of possibility. An armed guard may say "You *can* not pass," since he has physical power to prevent; hence the question "*Can* I pass the guard?" is perfectly natural. But where simple permission is required *may* should be used. "*May* I (not *can* I) use your ruler?"

can but, can not but: Discriminate carefully between these phrases. Both these sentences are grammatically correct, though they have not exactly the same meaning: "I *can not but* believe your proposition" means "I *can not help* believing," etc.; while "I *can but* believe your proposition" means "I *can only* believe," etc., a much less strong assertion.

canine should not be used for "dog."

cannon, a tubular gun, comes from Greek *kanna,*

reed, and must be distinguished from **canon**, a rule or law, which comes from the Greek *kanon*, rule.

capacity. Compare ABILITY.

caption is not to be used in the sense of title, save as to a legal document "showing the time, place, circumstances and authority—under which it was made or executed." "The affectation of fine big-sounding words which have a flavor of classical learning has had few more laughable or absurd manifestations than the use of *caption* (which means seizure, act of taking) in the sense . . . . of heading." —R. G. WHITE, *Words and Their Uses*, ch. 5, p. 98.

carnival, which comes from the Latin *caro*, flesh, + *levo*, take away, and alludes in Catholic countries to the pre-Lenten "farewell to meat," which concludes with Mardi Gras, has been stigmatized by Dr. William Mathews as an "outlandish term" which "has not a shadow of justification" in the popular sense of a gay festivity or revel. Inasmuch as the pre-Lenten farewell is marked by festival, frolic and fun, the stigmatization is undeserved, and such expressions as "the crows are holding high *carnival* on the hill" are not merely permissible but good.

carry: Although formerly used with the meaning of "conduct," "guide," or "escort" the term in this sense is now archaic. Do not say "Mr. A. *carried* Miss B. to the party;" say rather, ". . . . *escorted* Miss B. . . . " Compare also BRING.

case: Not to be applied to persons. The expression sometimes used of an eccentric or vicious person, "He is a *case*" or "a hard *case*," is an objectionable colloquialism.

casket, which is from the French *casque*, helmet, is frequently now used in the United States as a euphemism for **coffin**, which is from the Greek *kophinos*, basket. Such innovations are not to be recommended. They savor of pedantry, or, worse still, of pride. If *coffin* is not good enough for the worthy deceased or for his purse-proud relatives, why rest content with the simple *casket*, when by a mere figure of speech **sarcophagus** may save the reputation of both the living and the dead?

casuality is an obsolete form of **casualty**, and should be treated as such.

cataclasm and **cataclysm** are often interchanged. The Greek *kata*, down, is combined in the one case with *klaō*, break, and in the other with *klyzo*, wash. Where sudden overwhelming change is intended, as by revolution, *cataclasm* is to be preferred to *cataclysm*, which, though sometimes used to signify such a change, is strictly applied to an overwhelming flood of water, and, specifically, to the Noachian deluge.

catch on, to: A colloquialism having two distinct meanings, the first bordering on the vulgar, is used by persons with little sense of refinement in speech

for "to understand"; the second, used instead of "to suit the popular fancy" or "to please the popular taste."

ceiling which in derivation is allied with the French *ciel*, Lat. *cælum*, heaven, is to be distinguished from its homonym **sealing**, the act of attesting with a seal, which springs etymologically from the Latin *sigillum*, dim. of *signum*, mark.

celery, salary: Exercise care in spelling these words. *Celery* is a biennial herb; *salary*, a periodical allowance made as compensation for services.

cereal, a word derived from *Ceres*, the goddess of corn. It has nothing in common, save the sound, with *serial*, which fitly describes a literary publication in parts issued successively (Lat. *series*, *sere*, join). Exercise care in spelling these words.

cession, from Latin of *cedo*, yield, meaning surrender, must not be confounded with *session*, from Latin *sedeo*, sit, as used in the expression a *session* of court.

character, reputation: These are not synonymous terms. *Character* is what one is; *reputation* is that which one is thought to be. *Character* includes both natural and acquired traits; *reputation* designates only those traits acquired as by contact with one's fellow men. Holland in *Gold Foil* (p. 219) makes the following distinction: "*Character* lives in a man; *reputation* outside of him."

chargeable: Do not spell this word *chargable.* Remember its components are *charge* + *able* and the "e" is retained before the second "a."

cherubim and seraphim: Do not use these plurals as singulars. There is no such thing as *a cherubim.*

chew the rag: A low phrase sometimes used as an equivalent for "wrangle;" as, "stop chewing the rag," meaning, "cease wrangling." The use of expressions of this kind can not be too severely condemned.

childlike, childish: There is a distinction between these words. The one is used in a good sense, the other is spoken in derogation.

chin music: A low phrase sometimes used as an equivalent for "talk," but not uttered by persons of refinement.

chuck-full is the American colloquial form of *choke-* or *chock-full,* but this form finds no literary favor, and indeed the expression is far from elegant, both in sense and sound.

circus: This word should not be used as a synonym of "frolic;" as such it is a vulgar perversion.

cite, from the French *citer* (Latin *cito,* frequentative of *cieo,* call), means "mention by name, summon" and has no relationship with *site,* similarly pronounced, which means "local position," and is derived from Lat. *situa,* pp. of *sino,* put.

citizen: Not to be used for *person*, except when civic relations are referred to. "All *citizens* are entitled to the protection of the law," but not "Ten *citizens* were walking up the street," unless reference is had to some civic relation, as when opposed to soldiers, policemen, residents of the country, or the like.

claim: "He *claimed* that the discovery was his," "I *claim* that this is true," etc. Incorrect if the meaning is simply *assert* or *maintain;* but correct if the meaning is *assert* with readiness to *maintain*, and confidence that the thing *asserted* can be *maintained*, with the added idea that it makes for the advantage or side of him who *asserts* and *maintains* it.

clever: In American colloquial usage *clever* means "good-natured and obliging"; in English use it means "skilful." The American synonym for the English meaning of "clever" is *smart*, and the English synonym for the American meaning of "clever" is *jolly*.

climax, acme: Discriminate carefully between these words. A *climax* is a successive increase in force of language for the purpose of intensifying it. The *acme* is the highest point or greatest intensity attained.

climb down: As *to climb* signifies ascension, this colloquialism of the United States is apparently unwarranted. If, however, a descent be laborious, as

though by hands and feet, *crawl* should be used as a substitute for *climb*.

coeval, contemporary : Discriminate carefully between these terms. *Coeval* is said of things existing at the same time ; *contemporary* is applied to persons living in the same period.

coffin. Compare CASKET.

commence. Compare BEGIN.

commodious. Compare CONVENIENT.

common. Compare MUTUAL.

commonly : Do not confound this word with *generally*, *frequently*, *usually*. That is *commonly* done which is common to all ; that is *generally* done which is done by the larger number ; that is *frequently* done which is done by a large number or by a single person on many occasions ; that is *usually* done which is customarily done whether by many or one.

community is not a common noun personified, and therefore should always be preceded by the article. Congress and Parliament, State and Church have been personified, and may accordingly be used definitely in the singular number without the article ; but to permit such treatment to army, navy, public, or *community* would be a literary solecism.

compare to or **with :** We compare one thing *with* another to note points of agreement or difference. We *compare* one thing *to* another which we believe it resembles.

"As a writer of English he [Addison] is not to be *compared*, except with great peril to his reputation, *to* at least a score of men."—RICHARD GRANT WHITE, *Words and their Uses*, ch. 4, p. 79.

He should have said *with*. If Addison is to be *compared to* the (presumably) able writers referred to, it can not be with "peril to his reputation." If *comparing* him *with* these men is perilous to his reputation, then for his sake the comparison should not be made. The sentence is an attempt to combine two ideas incompatible in a single construction, *viz.*, "If he is *compared with* these men, it will be to his disadvantage," and "He is not to be *compared to* these men."—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

complected for **complexioned** is dialectical in the United States, and not sanctioned in general usage.

complement, compliment: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Complement* means "full quantity or number; that which is needed to complete or fill up some quantity or thing; or a complete or symmetrical whole." A *compliment* is "a delicate flattery, an expression of admiration or an act of civility or courtesy."

complete: A speech may be *finished* but far from *complete*. To *finish* is to bring to an end, but to *complete* is to bring to a state in which there is nothing more to do. You *finish* your dinner, but *complete* your toilet.

completion. Compare FINAL.

comprehend. Compare APPREHEND.

conciseness. Compare BREVITY.

conclude should not be used for "close." To *conclude* is a mental process; to *close* a physical one.

condign means "well-merited"; therefore, the common phrase "*condign* punishment" is correct, but the phrase "Deserving (or not deserving) *condign* punishment," is absurd because tautological.

conduct: Although the dictionaries give both a transitive and intransitive place to this verb in the signification of "behave," it should properly be used only reflexively, as a transitive. Say, "How did the débutante *conduct* herself?" rather than "How did the débutante *conduct?*"

confess. Compare OWN.

congratulate. Compare FELICITATE.

congregation, corps: Exercise care in the use of these words. A *congregation* is an assemblage of persons who meet as for religious worship or instruction; a *corps* is a body of men associated in some specific work, as a marine *corps;* a *corps* of engineers. A *congregation* embraces both sexes, *corps* is restricted to the male sex.

con man: A vulgar term for a swindler's decoy or "bunco-steerer"; a *confidence man:* not used in polite society.

conscious, which relates to knowledge within one's self, should not be used for *aware*, which implies being on the lookout. The one refers only to the past, or a present allied to the past, the other to the future. We are *conscious* of suffering, but *aware* of imminent danger. One is *conscious* of the inner workings of his own mind, but *aware* of that which exists without him.

constantly does not always mean "continually." A man eats *constantly* but he would soon cease to be a man if he were to eat *continuously*. In this sense *constantly* means "regularly" and *continuously* means "without ceasing." *Perpetually*, which means "incessantly," must also, and for the same reason, be distinguished from *constantly*. Compare PERPETUALLY.

construct: Although this verb formerly had the meaning of *construe*, both words having the same etymology, being derived from the Latin *con*, together, + *strua*, pile up, it must no longer be used as synonymous therewith. You *construe* a sentence but *construct* a theory.

construction. Compare BUILDING.

construe. Compare CONSTRUCT.

consul, counsel, council: Discriminate carefully between these words. A *consul* is an officer appointed to reside in a foreign port or city as the representative of his country's commercial interests; a *counsel*

is a lawyer engaged to give advice or act as advocate in court; a *council* is a body of persons elected or appointed to assist in the administration of government or to legislate; a *councilor* is a member of a council; a *counselor* is one who gives counsel; or, who is an adviser or a lawyer.

contagious, contiguous: Discriminate carefully between these words. A disease may be *contagious*, that is catching; fear is *contagious* when it spreads from one to another. *Contiguous* is used chiefly of neighboring regions or places and means "adjacent or situated so as to touch."

contemplate: May be used in the sense of *plan*, *intend*, but unless the matter in question be somewhat doubtful and involves further thoughtful consideration, it is better to say *intend* or *propose*.

contemporary. Compare COEVAL.

contemptible, contemptibly, contemptuous, contemptuously: Discriminate carefully between these words. A *contemptible* person is one deserving of contempt as for meanness or vileness; *contemptibly* means "in a contemptible manner" or "in a manner deserving of contempt." A *contemptuous* person is "a disdainful person." One who speaks *contemptuously* of another speaks of him with scorn or disdain.

continual, continuous: *Continual* implies the repeated renewal of an act; *continuous* means its unceasing continuity. The following sentence will

serve to illustrate the correct use of these words: "*Continual* interruptions impede *continuous* work."

continually. Compare CONSTANTLY.

controller, derived from the French *contre rôle*, and indicating a person whose office it is to keep a counter roll or check in the accounts of others, should not properly be spelt *comptroller*, which word originates in a false derivation from *compter*, to count. Instead of the word being thus derived, the spelling has been accommodated by some to the imagined derivation.

convenient, commodious: These terms are not always interchangeable. A room may be "convenient" in that it is suitable for a required purpose and "commodious" because it affords ample accommodation for the purpose for which it is applied. A book may be *convenient* in size or arrangement but not *commodious*.

correspond: When the word means "answer or conform to" it is followed by the preposition *to*; when it means "hold written communication" the preposition is *with*.

cotemporary which implies "equally temporary" should not be used for "contemporary" which means existing at the same time.

cough up: Used as an equivalent for "pay up," is vulgar and, therefore, not used in polite society.

council, councilor, counsel, etc. Compare CONSUL.

couple : Does not mean merely two, but two united, as it were by links. Thus a man and wife illustrate a *couple;* but to talk of "a couple of weeks" is an absurdity, for were two weeks coupled so as to become one, the product (one week multiplied by two) would no longer be a week but a fortnight.

couple, two : Discriminate carefully between these terms. *Couple* as an indefinite amount is a Teutonism common in America. Do not say "He has a *couple* of dollars in the bank"; say rather, "He has some money in the bank." Compare COUPLE.

courage. Compare BRAVERY.

courier, currier : Discriminate carefully between these terms. A *courier* is a special messenger sent express with letters or despatches; an attendant on a party of travelers. A *currier* is a man who dresses leather or combs a horse.

covey : As this word means "a brood or hatch of birds," especially quails or partridges, it should not be applied to persons or things as is done by Thackeray in "The Virginians," ch. 27.

creditable is sometimes confounded with **credible,** but the one word means that which redounds to one's credit, whereas the other signifies that which is worthy of belief.

crime, sin, vice : Exercise care in the use of these words. *Crime* is an abstractly, flagrant violation of law or morality in general; *sin,* disagreement in

word, thought, deed, or desire, whether by omission or commission, with the divine law; *vice* is the habitual deviation from moral rectitude.

crow, a colloquialism for *exult.*

crush implies to force out of shape, therefore, it is pleonastic to say "*crush out,*" of a mutiny.

cultivation, culture: Discriminate carefully between these words. While one of the various senses of *cultivation* is culture, *culture* should be used only of the development of the individual.

cunning, meaning "artful," and by extension "innocently artful," and hence "bright," "amusing," or "characterized by quaint and playful moods," is often improperly introduced to imply "dainty," "choice," especially if applied to anything diminutive. Such usage is not permissible. A kitten may properly be said to be *cunning*, but not a brooch, although (in archaic usage) that may exhibit the *cunning* or skill of the artificer.

curious, in such expressions as "It is a *curious* fact" has been hypercritically censured. The propriety of the usage is unquestionable. "*Curious* first . . . . denoted a state of mind, interest or diligence in inquiry or prosecution; then it was predicated of things which exhibit evident tokens of care (*cura*), dextrous application, ingenuity; and, as such things are out of the common and are apt to arrest attention, it naturally acquired the sense of 'novel,'

'unusual,' or more generally 'novel and noticeable.'"—FITZEDWARD HALL, *False Philology*, p. 25.

cuss: A vulgar corruption of "curse," designating a worthless or disagreeable person, and as such it should be avoided.—**To cuss and swear**, that is, "to use blasphemous language" is a phrase that also should be avoided by persons having pretensions to refinement.

custom, habit: It is the *custom* of a person to do a thing until it becomes a *habit*. From a voluntary act of the will it has grown into an involuntary practise. It will thus be seen that whereas a *custom* is followed, a *habit* is acquired. Moreover, as involuntary acts are not predicated of bodies of people, *habits* are of necessity compared to individuals, "The *custom* of social nipping tends to individual *habits* of dissipation."

customs. Compare EXCISE.

cut it out, with the sense "eliminate," is of recent introduction and may be characterized as expressive though inelegant.

cute, which is an abbreviation of *acute* and means "shrewd, smart, clever, or bright" is a colloquialism, and as such is not favored in certain literary circles.

D

daisy: A slang intensive, and as an equivalent for "fine" or "charming," applied to persons and

things, sometimes carelessly as "a daisy time," for "a pleasant time." In speaking of a woman, "Ain't she a *daisy*" is a vulgar way of saying "Isn't she charming."

damage should never be used for "cost" or "charge." *Damage* is injury or harm as to character, person, or estate; *cost* and *charge* involve or impiy expenditure of money.

dance, to lead one a: A colloquialism for "to divert one from a desired course, and thus create delay in its accomplishment." There is but little in the expression to recommend it.

dander is a vulgarism for "anger" and as such should not be used.

dangerous: Avoid the vulgar use of this term in the sense of "dangerously ill." A man near death may be dangerously ill, but he can not be *dangerous.*

dare, durst or **dared, daring:** "You daresn't" "he durstn't" are frequently used—the former always incorrectly, the latter generally so; for in nine cases out of ten, where the expression is used, the speaker desires to signify the present and not the past. The form is inelegant, but under certain conditions may be grammatically correct. You dare not; he dares not (daresn't): this for the *present.* In the *past* only, he durst not (or durstn't).

dead, deceased: Discriminate between these words. One may refer correctly to a *dead* man or a

dead horse, but the word *deceased* is applied correctly only to human beings.

dead slow: A colloquialism for "lacking in spirit or liveliness, dull or tedious;" applied indiscriminately to persons or things.

deal: Used sometimes loosely for **serve.** Do not say "Deal the potatoes;" here *serve* is preferable.

debase. Compare DEMEAN.

decease should never be used as a verb.

deceive: Deception implies the production of a false impression. It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish between the accomplishment of this object and the bare attempt. Yet one frequently hears the expression "he is deceiving me," when it is clear that (as the attempt is unsuccessful) the idea intended to be conveyed is "he is attempting to *deceive* me."

decided, decisive: These terms are not exactly synonymous. A *decided* fact is one that is unmistakable and beyond dispute; a *decisive* fact is one that terminates a discussion. A *decided* victory is not necessarily a battle *decisive* of a campaign.

deduction is frequently confounded with **induction.** The *in-* mounts up from facts to law and is the process of inferring general conclusions from particular cases; the *de-* descends from law to facts and is that which is deduced from premises or principles. *Induction* is termed analysis; *deduction*, synthesis.

deface, disfigure: Discriminate between these words. Persons *deface* things, for to *deface* implies a deliberate act of destruction; but *disfiguration* may take place to person or thing by the operation of either. Thus, an inscription or bond is *defaced*, but facial beauty is *disfigured* by smallpox or the weight of care.

delicious, delightful: These terms should be used with discrimination. *Delicious* is correctly applied to pleasures of the senses; *delightful* to that which charms, gratifies, or gives pleasure. A dish may be *delicious*, but not *delightful;* an entertainment may be *delightful*, but is certainly not *delicious*.

delusion, illusion: Discriminate carefully between these terms. A *delusion* is a mental error arising from false views or an unbalanced state of mind; an *illusion* is an unreal image which is presented to the senses. A mirage is an optical *illusion*.

demean signifies "to behave" and does not mean *debase* or *degrade*. A man *demeans* (*i. e.*, comports) himself as a gentleman; but even if he should *demean* himself as a churl, the verb would not imply a lowering of his dignity or *debasement*; his debasement would result alone from the conduct he pursued.

denominate. Compare NOMINATE.

depositary, depository: Discriminated in the best usage, *depositary* denoting a person with whom, and

depository a place in which anything is deposited for safe-keeping.

depravation, depravity : These terms are not synonymous. *Depravation* is the act or process of depraving or corrupting ; *depravity* is the condition of being depraved.

desert. Compare ABANDON.

desert, dessert : Discriminate carefully between these words. A *desert* is a barren waste ; an uncultivated and uninhabited wilderness ; a *dessert* is a service, as of fruits or sweetmeats, at the close of a dinner.

despatch : This word may be spelt correctly either " despatch " or " dispatch," notwithstanding the fact that some writers condemn the word " dispatch."

develop is to " unfold " or " bring to light *by degrees* " and should not be used for " expose " which means to " reveal or lay bare," without regard to manner.

device, devise : Discriminate carefully between these words. A *device* is something designed, invented, or constructed for a special purpose or for promoting an end, and may be used in either a good or bad sense. A *devise* is a gift of lands by a last will and testament. Compare BEQUEST.

die : A word often misapplied especially by persons accustomed to use inane superlatives as " She died with laughing " ; " I thought she'd have died."

Die, as a hyperbole, means, "to have a great desire for," and this sense is an undesirable perversion.

difference: Careful note should be made of the appropriate prepositions. The STANDARD DICTIONARY says: "Difference *between* the old and the new; differences *among* men; a difference *in* character; *of* action, *of* style; (less frequently) a difference (controversy) *with* a person; a difference *of* one thing *from* (incorrectly *to*) another."

different from: *Different to*, though common in England, is not sustained by good authority. The best literary usage is uniformly *from*, following the analogy of the verb *differ;* one thing *differs from* or is *different from* another.

differ from, differ with: One thing may differ *from* another, or one person may differ *from* another, as in physique; but one person may differ *with* another in opinion.

dippy: An extreme vulgarism for "mentally unbalanced."

direct should not be used where *address* is intended. Do not say "*Direct* your letters to me at Cook's;" say, rather, "*Address* your letters," etc.

directly, which means "in a direct or straight course or manner," and so "without medium," has not unnaturally been extended to signify "without medium or intervention of time; immediately."

American critics have objected to this use, but in England it is popular.

disappoint : Since *disappoint* implies frustration or defeat, one cannot be *agreeably disappointed ;* rather agreeably *surprised.*

discharge. Compare ASSUME.

discreet, discrete : Both words are derived from the Latin *discretus*, pp. of *discerno*, *dis* + *cerno*, separate, and formerly *discreet* was also spelt *discrete*, and even had the meaning of "separate, distinct," which sense now belongs exclusively to *discrete. Discreet* is used with the signification of "evincing discernment, judicious, prudent."

discern, discriminate : The latter word is often treated as synonymous with *distinguish*, and there is etymological reason for this, as both words mean to separate, but to *discern* is to "distinguish by the difference or differences ; differentiate." "What we *discern* we see apart from all other objects ; what we *discriminate* we judge apart, or recognize by some special mark or manifest difference. We *discriminate* by real differences ; we *distinguish* by outward signs."

disfigure. Compare DEFACE.

disremember : Avoid this term as provincial and archaic, and use *forget* instead.

dissociate is preferable to *disassociate ;* for associate is from the Latin *ad*, to, + *socius*, united, whereas

dissociate is from the Latin *dis-*, used with separative force, and *socius*. *Disassociate* is therefore nothing more or less than uniting to and at the same time severing from. The word, then, though used, is illogically formed and should be avoided.

distinguish. See DISCRIMINATE.

divers, diverse: By inattentive persons not infrequently interchanged. *Divers* implies severalty; *diverse*, difference. Hence we say: "The Evangelists narrate events in *divers* manners," but "The views of the two parties were quite *diverse*."

do: Often used unnecessarily. Do not say, "I shall succeed as others have *done* before me." Here "done" is pleonastic. But *do* may be used where it is purely auxiliary to a missing verb, as "I shall succeed as others *do*" (succeed).

dock is not a synonym for *wharf* although it is often used as such. The *dock* is water, the *wharf* is the abutting land or landing.

Dock is by many persons used to mean a wharf or pier; thus: "He fell off the *dock* and was drowned . . . . A man might fall into a *dock;* but to say that he fell off a *dock* is no better than to say that he fell off a hole."—R. G. WHITE, *Words and Their Uses*, ch. 5. p. 107.

donate: Incorrectly used as simply meaning *give*. As meaning to *bestow as a gift* or *donation*, it has been vehemently objected to by some critics, but

the word has certainly acquired a place in popular use, and is no more rendered unnecessary by the previous existence of *give* than *donation* is by the previous existence of *gift*. *Donate* should be used of the bestowal of important, ceremonious, or official gifts only.—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

done: Avoid using the past participle of verbs instead of the imperfect. Do not say, "You *done* it," or "you *seen* it," when you mean "you *did* it," or "you *saw* it." Nor use the past tense for the perfect participle, as in, "If you had *came*" when you mean "If you had *come*."

don't is a contraction of *do not*, and in this sense is permissible; but as signifying *does not*, the proper contraction for which is *doesn't*, its use is inaccurate. In writing, the uncontracted forms are much to be preferred, though in conventional speech the abbreviations are accepted.

don't believe, don't think: "I *don't believe* I'll go"; "I *don't think* it will rain"; solecisms now in almost universal use. Say, rather, "I believe I will not go"; "I think it will not rain."

don't make no error. See ERROR.

dopey: A vulgar substitute for "sleepy; dull; thick-headed."

dose, doze: Discriminate carefully between these words. That which a physician prescribes is a *dose;* that which a sleepy patient may fall into is a *doze*.

do tell! An exclamation of surprise the equivalent of which is "Is it possible!"—an inane provincialism to be avoided.

doubt. See WHETHER.

doubt but that: In this phrase *but* is superfluous as it does not add anything to the sense.

dozen: Exercise care in writing or uttering this word. If a number precedes, then *dozen* forms the correct plural: if not, the plural is formed by adding an *s*. Say "six *dozen* sheep," but "many *dozens* of cattle."

draft, draught: Exercise care in using these words. A *draft* is an order drawn by one person or firm on another for the payment of money to a third; a *draught* is a current of air passing through a channel or entering by an aperture. These words are pronounced alike and modern American practise favors the spelling of *draft* for both.

drive: Critics have seen fit to cavil at the distinction between *drive* and *ride*, objecting that the coachman *drives* the lady, and asking whether traveling by train or trolley-car is a *ride* or *drive*. The popular idea is that one *rides* in a public conveyance but *drives* when in a private carriage. As a matter of convenience, however, the old-time distinction so far as it concerns *riding* on horseback and *driving* in a carriage is good, and in no way encroaches on the question of travel submitted. Horse-back exer-

cise and a carriage drive are essentially exercises for pleasure and so not to be confounded with travel; but if there were no distinguishing expression for the two, we should have to add a qualifying term to "ride," to indicate the form of recreation enjoyed. Again, on the legal principle of *Qui facit per alium facit per se* (He who does a thing by another does it himself), the lady who commissions her coachman to *drive*, is herself the author of his driving, and *drives*.

drunk: In modern usage of the verb this word is confined to the past participle. It is therefore not now proper to say "They drunk his health," say, rather, "They *drank* his health." Do not say "I have *drank*" when you mean "I have *drunk*."

dry up! A vulgar imperative for "be quiet" or "stop talking" and as such not used in refined circles.

dubersome: Of a vacillating nature, doubtful: an absurd corruption of *dubious* to be avoided.

due, owing: Words now often used interchangeably. *Due* should be limited in its use to that which has to be paid, the word *owing* being indicative of the source of the existing condition. An obligation may be discharged as being *due* to a man's estate or his character. A man's wealth is *owing* to inheritance, good fortune, toil or thrift.

Dutch: Often misapplied to the Germans from a mistaken idea of the spelling of the German word

Deutsch. The Dutch are Hollanders, and the Germans are "Deutsch" in Germany.

E

each, every: These words should never be used with pronouns or verbs in the plural.

each other: Strictly applied to two only, whereas *one another* implies more than two. "The two friends congratulated *each other*" (*i. e.*, each one the other). "This commandment I give unto you that ye love one *another*." Yet this expression is now used carelessly as a reciprocal pronoun; and Whittier writes "To worship rightly is to love *each other*."

effect, affect: Distinguish carefully between these terms. To *effect* means to accomplish; to *affect*, to influence. By concerted action men may *effect* reforms which shall *affect* their condition.

effluvia: A word often used incorrectly from the mistaken idea that it is of the singular number. Do not say "What a disagreeable *effluvia*" when you wish to draw attention to an unpleasant smell. If you must use the word, say "*effluvium*."

egg. Compare BAD.

either: An adjective denoting "one or the other of two" often used incorrectly with a plural verb; as, "Either *are* likely to sail." Now, inasmuch as "either" means "one or *the other* of two the verb in the sentence should be in the singular and to be

each
either

correct the sentence should be "Either *is* likely to sail." However, in its best and strictest usage *either*, as has already been said, means "one or the other of these," as, "*either* horn of a dilemma"; but there is authority for its use as "any" and "each of two" or "both." The former of these is, however, a distinctly improper use, and the latter—though sanctioned by "on *either* side one, and Jesus in the midst," (*John* xix, 18) is better left unsaid.

either you or I are (am or is) right: Which should it be? You *are*; I *am*; who *is*—which of the two? The complete sentence is clearly "Either you (are right) or I (am right)." If the pronoun had been coupled, as in "Both you and I" the plural verb would of course follow; but the very fact of this would seem to indicate that where they are distinctly disjoined, as here, the verb should not be plural and should therefore be singular. Yet who could say "either you or I *am* right." Peculiar as it is—it being impossible to say either "you is" or "I is" the solution is to be found in the use of *is*; and the correct rendering is, "Either you or I—one of us,—*is* right." Dr. Latham cites the rule thus, "Wherever the word *either* or *neither* precedes the pronouns, the verb is in the third person." He adds a second rule to the effect that if the disjunctive is without the word *either* or *neither*, then the verb agrees with the first of the two pronouns. He would

therefore say "either you or I *is* right," but "you or I *are* right." It is, however, questionable whether usage bears with him.

elder, eldest; older, oldest: Discriminate carefully between these terms. *Elder* and *eldest* are correctly applied only to persons and usually only to persons in the same family, as, "his *elder* brother." *Older* and *oldest* are used of persons or things without any restriction; "the *oldest* inhabitant"; "the older *road* is now closed."

elegant: Often misused for *pleasant*. *Elegant* refers to qualities of refinement, grace, taste or polish. One may say "an *elegant* gown"; "an *elegant* outfit"; but not "an *elegant* time" nor "an *elegant* view."

else: E. S. Gould and certain other critics take exception to a possessive use of this word, upon which the former says "A comparatively modern and a superlatively ridiculous custom has been introduced by putting not the noun but the adjective, *else*, in the possessive case. . . . *Else*, in the way it is used, means besides . . . [one] might as well say somebody besides's, etc. The proper construction of the several phrases is somebody's else, nobody's else."

On this subject the STANDARD DICTIONARY says: "The expressions **some one else, any one else, every one else, somebody else,** which are in good usage, are treated as substantive phrases and have the possessive inflection upon *else;* as, *somebody else's* um-

brella; but some people prefer to treat them as elliptical expressions; as, the umbrella is *somebody's* else (*i. e.*, other than the person previously mentioned)."

embryo: The plural of this word is formed by the adding of "s" not "es" as in *potatoes*.

emerge, immerge: Discriminate carefully between these terms. To *emerge* is to come out of; issue or proceed from something; to reappear as in a new state; as, "the butterfly *emerges* from the chrysalis." To *immerge* is to plunge into anything, especially a fluid; or to disappear; as, "some heavenly bodies *immerge* in the light of the sun."

emigrant, immigrant: These words are to be carefully distinguished with regard, not to the person but to the country from which or to which a person comes. The *e* = *ex*, out of; the *im* = *in*, into. The *emigrant* from Ireland is an *immigrant* when he lands in New York.

eminent, imminent: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Eminent* means distinguished, prominent, conspicuous. *Imminent* means impending; threatening.

endorse, indorse: From the Latin *in*, on, and *dorsum*, back, means to write or place upon the back of. It is therefore pleonastic to say, as is frequently done, "*indorse* on the back of."

The spelling *indorse* which follows the medieval Latin is that preferred in law and commerce; *en-*

dorse, a spelling which follows middle English analogy, is the preferred form according to literary usage.

enjoy: A word often misused. Do not say "I enjoy bad health" nor "I enjoy good health," when you suffer from illness or are in a perfect state of health. One enjoys health (here good is superfluous), but how can one *enjoy* bad health?

enthuse, said to be of journalistic origin, is characterized as slang by the STANDARD DICTIONARY, meaning "manifest enthusiasm or delight."

enthusiast, fanatic: Discriminate carefully between these words. An *enthusiast* is one who is ardently zealous in any pursuit; a *fanatic* is one whose mind is imbued with excessive or extravagant notions on religious subjects.

epithet: Often misused from the mistaken idea that an epithet must necessarily be opprobrious in character or imply opprobrium. An epithet is an adjective or a phrase or word used adjectively to describe some quality or attribute of its object, as in "a *benevolent* man," "*Father* Æneas," "benevolent" and "father" are epithets.

equally as well: An erroneous phrase rendered correctly *equally well.* The introduced conjunction has no grammatical place in the sentence, the meaning of which is clear without it.

equanimity of mind. A pleonasm since equanimity means "evenness of *mind*."

error, don't you make no: An ungrammatical and therefore incorrect phrase sometimes used to assert a fact; say, rather, "make no error."

eruption, irruption: Discriminate carefully between these words. An *eruption* is a bursting forth as from inclosure or confinement. An *irruption* is a sudden incursion; an invasion.

eternal, everlasting: Distinguish carefully between these words. That which is *eternal* is without beginning or end; that which is *everlasting* is without end only.

euphemism. Compare EUPHUISM.

euphuism is often improperly used for *euphemism*. Added to the Greek *eu*, well, is *phyē*, nature, in the former, and *phēmi*, speak, in the latter. The former is general and denotes a style, an affectation of speech or writing, whereas *euphemism* is particular and denotes a figure of speech.

evacuate should be distinguished from **vacate**. *Evacuate* does not mean to go away but to make empty; and when the word is used in regard to military movements, evacuation is a mere consequence, result, or at most, concomitant of the going away of the garrison. (R. G. WHITE, *Words and Their Uses*, ch. 5, p. 109.) To *vacate* is to surrender possession by removal.

event: Care should be exercised in the use of this word. It means strictly a happening; that which happens or comes to pass as distinguished from a thing that exists. In interlocutory proceedings a defendant was granted costs (which happened to be considerable) *in any event.* The plaintiff was shrewd enough to drop all further proceedings, and consequently there was no *event* so the heavy costs which he would have had to pay fell upon his opponent.

eventuate: Although some writers condemn the use of this word as a synonym for "happen" the use is recorded by modern dictionaries and may be considered good English. Originally and in a restricted sense *eventuate* meant "to culminate in some result"; now, it means also "to be the issue of."

even up: A slang expression much used in the South and West to signify "get even with; exact compensation from": an undesirable phrase.

ever: Where *ever* is intended to be used as an adverb of degree and not an adverb of time, it is improper to substitute *never* (not ever) for the word. If the substitution be made, it must be with the understanding that the thought of the sentence is changed from degree to time. "If he run *ever* so well, he can not win" is not correctly expressed by "If he run *never* so well," etc., unless the thought intended to be conveyed is "If he run, and run so

well, as *never* in his life before, he can not win." The tendency has been to use both *ever so* and *never so* loosely and vaguely.

ever so: The phrases *ever so great, little, much, many*, etc., meaning "very" or "exceedingly great," etc., may be carefully discriminated from *never so great, little*, etc., meaning "inconceivably great, little," etc. Compare NEVER SO.

every: A collective pronominal singular that is sometimes incorrectly used with a verb in the plural. Do not say "Every passenger of the two hundred aboard *were* detained at the dock." Say, rather, "Every passenger . . . *was* detained."

every confidence: The phrase is objected to by some critics on the ground that "*every* is distributive, referring to a number of things that may be considered separately, while confidence is used as a mass-noun." The adjective, therefore, as signifying *all* or *entire*, is not permitted, though the phrase is accepted by many as being elliptical, the words "sort of" being understood after *every*; but *implicit confidence* is a preferable phrase.

every which way: A pleonastic colloquialism for "every way"; "in all directions"; either of which phrases may be used in preference.

evidence, testimony: These words are often used as if they were interchangeable. Greenleaf says "*Testimony*, from the Latin, *testis*, a witness, is, how-

ever, only a species of evidence through the medium of witnesses. The word *evidence*, in legal acceptation, includes all the means by which any alleged matter of fact, the truth of which is submitted to investigation, is established or disproved." (*Evidence*, vol. i. ch. 1, p. 3.) Again "*Evidence* rests upon our faith in human *testimony*, as sanctioned by experience" (vol. i. ch. 10, p. 70). We may have the *testimony* of a traveler that a fugitive passed his way; but his footprints in the sand are *evidence* of the fact.

evident. Compare APPARENT.

exasperate. Compare AGGRAVATE.

executer, executor: Discriminate carefully between these words. An *executer* is one who performs some act; a doer. An *executor* is one who in law administers an estate.

exceed, excel: Formerly *exceed* (from the Latin *ex*, forth, + *cedo*, go, = to go beyond the mark) had for one of its meanings *excel* (from the Latin *ex*, out, + *celsus*, raised, = to go beyond in something good or praiseworthy; outdo). Now these words must be distinguished. This is to be particularly noted in the derivatives *excessive* and *excellent*—the former signifying an excess in that which ought not to be exceeded, the latter in that where it is praiseworthy to exceed. It is, therefore, not correct to speak of weather as being *excessively* cold; say rather, *very* or *exceedingly* cold.

except, unless : These words are not synonymous. Avoid such locutions as "You will not enjoy it *except* you earn it." Say rather, "You will not enjoy it *unless* you earn it."

exceptionable is to be distinguished from **exceptional**. *Exceptionable* conduct is that which is out of the common and forms the exception to the rule.

excise, customs, tolls : Distinguish from each other. Mill in his "Political Economy" says:

"Taxes on commodities are either on production within the country, or on importation into it, or on conveyance or sale within it, and are classed respectively as *excise*, *customs*, or *tolls* and transit duties." (bk. v. ch. 3, p. 562.)

Thus, *excise* is a charge on commodities of domestic production; *customs* is a charge or duty assessed by law levied on goods imported or exported; *tolls* are charges for special privileges as, passing over a bridge or a turnpike.

excite, incite : Exercise care in the use of these words. *Excite* means to produce agitation or great stir of feeling in; *incite* is to rouse to a particular action.

exemplary should not be used for "excellent." That which is *exemplary* serves as a model or an example worthy of imitation: that which is *excellent* possesses distinctive merit or excels that which is good or praiseworthy.

exodus: Sometimes misused for **exit** or **departure.** Do not say "I made a hasty *exodus*"; say, rather, "My *exit* (or *departure*) was hasty."

expect is commonly misused for *think*, *believe*, *suppose;* also for *suspect.* *Expect* refers to the future, not to the past or present, usually with the implication of interest or desire. Yet "I *expect* it is," or even "I *expect* it *was*," is very common.

expect likely, expect probably. The STANDARD DICTIONARY says of these careless locutions, it is not the expectancy, but the future event, that is *likely* or *probable.* One may say "I think it is *likely*," "I think it [the act, event, or the like] *probable*," or "It seems *likely*" or "*probable.*" When another person's expectancy is matter of conjecture, one may say "You *probably expect* to live many years"; *i. e.*, "I *think it probable* that *you expect*," etc.; but "Probably you expect," etc., would be better.

F

face the music: Slang for to confront with boldness anything of an unpleasant character or any task especially difficult: a metonymic but inelegant phrase.

fade away: In modern parlance a slang phrase first introduced by Thackeray (*Vanity Fair*, ch. 60, p. 540), and meaning "disappear or vanish mysteriously." The phrase is in good usage, however, in

the sense of "to pass away gradually; vanish; die out;" as, "religious animosity would of itself *fade away*" (MACAULAY, *Hist. of England*, vol. 2, p. 134).

faint, feint, and **feign** all come from the French, *feindre*, which is derived from the Latin, *fingo*, shape. The first two, similarly pronounced, have very different significations. *Faint* means a sudden loss of consciousness or swoon; *feint* signifies a deceptive move or pretense. To *feign* is to make a false show of; pretend.

fake: Slang term for imposition; fraud; also, fictitious or manufactured news. Expressive but inelegant.

fakement: Slang for an act of fraud. Less desirable than preceding and equally inelegant.

fanatic. Compare ENTHUSIAST.

farewell: When separated by a pronoun *farewell* is written as two words; as, *fare you well.* Exception has been taken to Byron's pathetic lines

> *Fare thee well*, and if for ever,
> Then for ever, *fare thee well;*

but this is hypercriticism for here the pronoun is nothing but the Anglo-Saxon dative.

farther, further: *Farther* should be used to designate longitudinal distance; *further* to signify quantity or degree. Thus, "How much *farther* have we to go?" "Proceed no *further* along that course."

fault: The different meanings of this word should be clearly distinguished. A man perplexed or one who has made a mistake is *at fault;* if he has done anything for which he may be blamed he is *in fault.* A hound is *at fault* when he has lost the scent.

faun, fawn: Homophones each with a distinct meaning. *Faun* is from the Latin *Faunus*, god of agriculture and of shepherds, and signifies a god of the woods; *fawn*, from the Anglo Saxon *faegen*, fain, signifies to seek favor by cringing and subserviency.

favor in the sense of "resemble" is a colloquialism, the use of which is not recommended.

faze, feeze: Slang terms for "disconcert" or "confuse," either of which is to be preferred.

feel to: A colloquial expression meaning "to have an impulse;" as "I *feel to* agree with you," which can not be too severly condemned.

feel bad, feel badly: Discriminate carefully between these terms. If you mean to express the idea that you are ailing in health, *feel bad* is correct. *Feel bad* is synonymous with *feel ill* and is correct. One might as well say *feel illy* as *feel badly* if the latter were correct as applied to health. However, *feel badly* is correct when the intention is to say that one's power of touch is defective as through a mishap to the fingers.

feel good, feel well: Distinguish carefully between these phrases. *Good* signifies having physical

qualities that are useful, or that can be made productive of comfort, satisfaction, or enjoyment, as, a *good* view, *good* flour; *well* signifies having physical health, free from ailment; as, "two are sick, the rest are *well*." Compare GOOD.

felicitate, congratulate: The distinction in the meanings of these words should be carefully noted. To *felicitate* is to pronounce one happy and in the strict sense, applies to self alone; *congratulate* is to wish joy to another. In recent years *congratulate* has been applied to one's self, and *felicitate* to another; thus the application of the meanings of these words have been reversed by careless usage.

Trench says, "When I *congratulate* a person (*congratulor*) I declare that I am sharer in his joy, that what has rejoiced him has rejoiced me also." *Gratulation*, does not signify participation, and therefore, is a mere *felicitation* (or admission of existing happiness or cause for happiness) addressed to another.

female: An opprobrious or contemptuous epithet for woman. *Female* should be restricted to its correct use. Do not say "With that modesty so characteristic of a *female*"; say rather, ". . . so characteristic of a woman." Compare LADY.

fermentation, fomentation: Exercise care in the use of these words. *Fermentation* is a chemical decomposition of an organic compound; *fomentation*, is the act of treating with warm water.

fetch. Compare BRING.

few: Sometimes used incorrectly for "in some measure"; "to an extent"; "somewhat"; "rather"; as, "Did you enjoy yourself?" "Just a *few*." *Few* is correctly applied to quantity and incorrectly to quality; therefore, its use as in the illustration given here is not good English.

few and **a few** must not be confounded. "*Few* men would act thus" means that scarcely any would; but "*A few* men will always speak the truth" means that there are some, though not many, whose custom this is.

few, little: The first of these words is sometimes improperly used for the second. Measurement by count is expressed by *few*, measurement by quantity by *little;* as, "the loss of a *few* soldiers will make but *little* difference to the result." "The *fewer* his acquaintances, the *fewer* (not the *less*) his enemies." *Few*, *fewer*, *fewest*, are correctly used in describing articles the aggregate of which is expressed in numbers; *little*, *less*, and *least* are used of objects that are spoken of in bulk.

figure: E. S. Gould and other critics object to the use of the word in the sense of an amount stated in numbers, as "Goods at a high *figure*." But Dean Alford is content to give his sanction to its use, and the literary and general public have followed him.

final: Sometimes misused in such a sentence as "the *final* completion of the work." This is inadmissible, for completion necessarily implies finality.

financial, monetary, pecuniary: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Financial* is applied correctly to public funds or to the revenue of a government. *Monetary* and *pecuniary* apply only to transactions between individuals.

finish. Compare COMPLETE.

fire: As this verb possesses the sense of impel, explode, discharge, as by using fire; as, "*fire* a mine or gun," it has been humorously applied to discharge from employment, as "*fire* a clerk." But the usage is slang, and as such is avoided by careful speakers.

first: Say the "*first* two" rather than the "two *first*," for unless they be bracketed equal there can not be two *firsts*. For a similar reason the expression seen in cars, "Smoking on the *four rear* seats," is equally incorrect. There can not be four *rear* (or *last*) seats; but there can be "the *last four* seats." As meaning the four seats collectively which are situated at the rear, the phrase has its only justification.

first and **firstly**: *First* being an adverbial form is the correct form to use. *Firstly* has been used by Dickens, De Quincey, and others but in modern usage *first* is the preferred form.

first-rate is an adjectival not an adverbial expression. One may say correctly, "He is a *first-rate* walker," but not that "he walks *first-rate*."

fish: When speaking of fish collectively this word represents the plural; speaking of fish severally the plural is formed by the addition of *es*.

fix: The colloquial use of this noun for a position involving embarrassment or a dilemma or predicament has not the sanction of literary usage. Do not say "I am in a bad *fix*" say, rather, ". . . in a bad *condition*." As a verb, it is better unused in the sense of *set* or *arrange*. As meaning "put into thorough adjustment or repair," with the word *up* added, it is sanctioned by popular usage; but the expression is thought inelegant and indefinite. Some more discriminating term is to be preferred. *Fix*, in the sense of "disable, injure, or kill," and "fix up" in the sense of "dress elegantly," are vulgarisms.

flap-doodle: An inelegant term for "pretentious silly talk characterized by an affectation of superior knowledge." *Twaddle* is a preferable synonym. Compare FLUB-DUB.

flash for ostentatious display, as of money, is inelegant. *Display* is a preferable word.

flew is often misused for *fled*. Do not say "He *flew* the city" when you mean that he *fled* from it.

flies on: "There are no *flies on* him," is a slang phrase not used by persons accustomed to refined diction.

flock: A word sometimes misapplied. Do not say "a *flock* of girls;" say, rather, "a *bevy* of girls" and "a *flock* of sheep." *Flock* is correctly applied to a company or collection of small animals as sheep, goats, rabbits, or birds.

flop is an inelegant word used sometimes to denote change of attitude on a subject. Do not say "He *flopped* over to the other side'; say, rather, "He went over. . . ."

flub-dub: A slang term used to designate a literary work that is worthless.

flummux: A vulgarism sometimes used for "perplex" or "disconcert."

fly off the handle: A colloquial phrase meaning to "lose one's self control" as from anger.

folks: The modern colloquial plural use of this term is not to be recommended. The word is properly used, both in singular and plural form, as *folk*, its correct signification being "people, collectively or distributively."

foment, ferment: Exercise care in the use of these words. *Foment* is to bathe with warm or medicated lotions; *ferment*, to cause chemical decomposition in. Both words are also used figuratively.

fondling, foundling: Discriminate carefully be-

tween these words. A *fondling* is a person fondled or caressed ; a *foundling* is a deserted infant whose parents are unknown.

fooling : The use of the word in the sense of "deceiving" has been condemned by certain writers as a "very vulgar vulgarism," but is permissible, having the sanction not only of good literary authority but of modern dictionaries. See Tennyson's "Gareth and Lynette" (st. 127): "Worse than being fool'd of others is to fool one's self."

for and to : These words are often added at the end of a sentence by careless speakers but are redundant. Do not say "Less than you think *for*"; nor "Where are you going *to?*"

forget it : When used as the equivalent of "don't talk about it," is a vulgarism that can not be too severely condemned.

fork over : Slang for "hand over," a preferable phrase.

former : This word can refer to only one of two persons or things previously mentioned, never to any one of three or more. Avoid such construction as the following: "Mr. Henley says that had Rosetti and Byron been contemporaries, some of the *former's* (meaning Rosetti) verses would have caused the latter (meaning Byron) to blush." Here, *former* refers to Mr. Henley, but the context shows clearly the intention of the writer to refer to Rosetti.

forsake. Compare ABANDON.

fort, forte : These two words similarly pronounced must be distinguished. In each case the derivation is the same (the Latin *fortis*, strong), and although there is an alternative spelling of *fort* for "forte" it is not the favored form. A *fort* signifies a fortification held by a garrison; *forte* is that in which an individual chiefly excels.

fracas : A *fracas* is a brawl or an uproar, not a part of the human anatomy. Therefore, avoid such expressions as "He was stabbed in the fracas." Say, rather, "During the fracas he was stabbed."

fraud : Just as *cheat* has been made to do duty both for the act and the person committing the act, so in colloquial usage has *fraud* been made to represent not only the act but also its perpetrator. It has even been extended to "a deceptive or spurious thing." These usages of *fraud* are, however, not to be recommended.

freeze : This word has nothing in common with *frieze* save the pronunciation. The former is an Anglo-Saxon term, whereas the latter comes from the French *frise*, for *fraise*, a ruff. To *freeze* is to convert into ice, congeal; to *frieze* is to provide with a *frieze*, which is, in architecture, the middle division of an entablature.

freeze out : A vulgar phrase for to "treat with coldness, as of manner or conduct."

freeze to: An inelegant colloquialism for "cling to," sometimes found in literature as in Kipling's "Mine Own People," p. 209.

frequently. Compare COMMONLY.

fresh in the sense of "full of ignorant conceit and presumption" is slang and as such is avoided by persons careful with their diction.

friend: Carefully distinguish between *friend* and *acquaintance*. The former is an acquaintance who has been admitted to terms of intimacy, and who is regarded with a certain amount of affectionate regard. A person to whom one has received a bare introduction is an acquaintance—nothing more.

frieze. Compare FREEZE.

from: A preposition often incorrectly used for "of." *From* should not be used elliptically. Do not say "He died *from* pneumonia" when you mean *from the effects of* pneumonia." Here *effect* suggests the cause from which the result proceeded. "He died *of* pneumonia" is correct.

froze: A term sometimes misused for frozen. *Froze* is the imperfect of the verb *freeze*, while *frozen* is a participial adjective. It is incorrect to say, "My hands are *froze*," here *frozen* should be used.

-ful. The plural of compounds ending in *-ful*, as *spoonful* is formed in the same manner as the plural of other nouns of regular formation—by the simple addition of a final "s," as, *spoonfuls*. So when a

physician prescribes medicine to be taken by the spoonful more than once a day, these are correctly spoken of as *spoonfuls*. But supposing more than one medicine is to be taken and that the medicines do not assimilate thus requiring *more than one spoon* to administer them; then it would be correct to refer to the different doses as *spoons full*, since the words denote more than one spoon full. *Spoonfuls* denote one spoon filled more than once.

fulfil: Remember that in this word the "l" is not doubled but that it is in *fulfilling*.

full, fuller: Terms sometimes incorrectly used. A "*full* cup," is a cup completely filled, therefore it would seem illogical to say "my cup is *fuller* than yours." As a rule all words that in themselves express the idea of completion or perfection should be used only in the positive degree. A perfection greater than itself is inconceivable, yet in literature, and with speakers who are accustomed to a careful choice of words, this form of expression has been permitted for comparison in the absence of an absolute standard of measurement.

full: A coarse substitute for "intoxicated."

funeral: A term sometimes misused for "affair," or "business," as in the phrase "Not my *funeral*" meaning "No business of mine." The use is not to be commended.

funny: As a colloquialism signifying "queer" this adjective should be used with care. It is better retained for signification of that which is mirth-provoking or ludicrous. *Funny* is sometimes used incorrectly to imply silly impropriety, as in the phrase, 'Don't get *funny*." Such usage should be avoided.

further. Compare FARTHER.

future, the: Used sometimes to signify the present; as, "I *shall be* happy to accept"—this is not what is meant. The meaning is "I *am* happy to accept, for I *shall be* happy to come," or "(Because) I shall be happy to (come I am happy to) accept"; and the elliptical result is that there is elision of the words in parentheses. In a recent lawsuit the plaintiff lost $10,000 because a so-called guarantee was given in these terms: "I *will* guarantee" instead of "I (hereby *do*) guarantee." The guarantee provided had never been asked for, given, or obtained. The credulous victim had accepted a promise, without condition, for a performance; and he lost. Time has improved his knowledge of the force of the English tongue.

G

galaxy: Exercise care in the use of this word. It signifies any brilliant circle or group; as, a *galaxy* of beauties or of gems, and is never correctly used of any person or thing of inferior quality.

gall: Correctly used is "an intensely bitter feeling." When used as a synonym for "cool assurance" or "impudence" it is slang which should be avoided.

gang is correctly applied to a squad of laborers, and others detailed to certain given tasks. But sometimes applied also, usually in an uncomplimentary way, to a company of persons who meet habitually for social intercourse; as, "He sent a letter to the *gang* at Seelig's."

gazebo: A term often misused for "chief person." A *gazebo* is a belvedere or elevated summer-house and as such is often the highest point of a building: applied to a person the term is slang.

gee whiz: A slang exclamation of astonishment that it is best to avoid.

geezer: A vulgar term applied, usually in derision to elderly persons, particularly women. Formerly it was used to designate a mummer or other grotesque character.

generally. Compare COMMONLY.

genius, genus: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Genius* implies the possession of remarkable natural gifts through which their possessor may attain ends or obtain results by intuitive power. *Genus* is a class or kind. In the natural sciences it is the subordinate of an order, tribe, or family.

gent: As an abbreviation for *gentleman* this word is not permitted in refined speech; and *gentleman* is

never correctly used for *man* as a mere indication of sex. Compare LADY

genteel is sometimes improperly applied to persons who are preferably spoken of as polite or well-bred. If used with regard to persons, it should only be in connection with some specific characteristic, as "a person of *genteel* speech or appearance," or to indicate suitability to the condition of a well-bred person, as in the expression "a *genteel* fortune."

genuine. Compare AUTHENTIC.

get a gait or **move on:** Slang phrases for "hasten one's steps or actions," which, while it may not be so expressive, is more elegant and refined.

get over: Sometimes used for *deny* or *refute.* One doesn't get over a charge but *refutes* it.

git: Vulgarism used in the imperative for *get out.*

go. See WENT.

go back on: A colloquialism for abandon, deceive, play false. Inelegant and not used by persons accustomed to nice discriminations of speech.

going is sometimes used as a synonym for *just about.* One frequently hears, "I am just going to sing," from a person who is *about to* do so. The verb *go,* in the transitive, is sometimes used loosely in the colloquial sense of "endure" or "wager." Polite speech does not sanction such locutions as "I can not *go* that music;" "I will *go* you a dollar on the race."

gone : The phrase "He's been *gone* this month," though frequently used, is better rendered thus : "It's a month since he went." The verb "to go" does not lend itself agreeably to this treatment which is common with other verbs (as "He has been known and loved for years"), and the expression "this month," for "this past month," is somewhat too elliptical to be received with favor.

gone case : A vulgarism sometimes used to denote that the affection bestowed by one person on another of the opposite sex shows him to be serious in his intentions. It is also a vulgarism when applied to one who is in a hopeless condition, as from illness.

good should never be used for *well.* Do not say, "I feel pretty *good*" or "she plays that pretty *good*" when you mean that you "feel pretty *well*" or that "she plays fairly *well.*"

go past : "Go" usually implies motion forward, therefore, it is pleonastic to say "go past." Say, rather, that you "go *by*" and not *past.* Nevertheless a march *past* is a recognized expression.

got : This word is used correctly for acquired or obtained, but is incorrectly used to denote simple possession and correctly implies *effort to secure* something. Sometimes it is used redundantly ; as, "He has *got* it"; the simpler form, "He has it" is preferable. "We have *got* to do it," while emphatic, is less so than "we *must* do it."

go the whole hog: An inelegant phrase used for "to go to the utmost limit." Carlyle traces the origin of this phrase from the Irish because in Ireland *hog* was a synonym for a tenpenny piece, a coin once current in that country.

graduate: The use of this verb in the intransitive has been condemned by purists but is now well established. Thus, one may correctly say "He *was graduated* from a university" or, "*He graduated* from a university."

grammar: The phrases **good grammar** and **bad grammar** have been condemned as false syntax by some persons unfamiliar with the meanings of the word "grammar." One meaning recorded by the STANDARD DICTIONARY is "speech or writing considered with regard to its correctness; propriety of linguistic usage; as, he uses *good* or *bad grammar*."

The *New York Herald* (March 4, 1906) says: "*Good grammar* is one of those cheap vulgarisms which most offend the scholarly ear. A phrase is either grammatical or ungrammatical. It can not be characterized as either 'good' or 'bad' grammar."

The writer of the foregoing based his criticism on a misunderstanding. The word "grammar" is not like the word "orthography," a word made up of *orthos*, correct, and *grapho*, to write. Grammar does not carry with it the implication of correctness, and modern grammarians bear this out. Prof. Edward

Maetzner in his "English Grammar: Methodical, Analytical and Historical," so defines the term:

"*Grammar*, or the *doctrine of language*, treats of the laws of speech, and, in the first place, of the *Word*, as its fundamental constituent, with respect to its *matter* and its *form*, in *prosody*, or the doctrine of sounds, and *morphology*, or the doctrine of forms, and then of the *combination* of words in speech, in *syntax*, or the doctrine of the joining of words and sentences" (vol. i. p. 12).

Syntax, which is a part of grammar, is sometimes confused with grammar itself. It is that part of grammar which treats of the sentence and of its construction, and embraces, among other features, the doctrine of the collocation of words in sentences in connected speech, treating of their arrangement and relative positions, as required by grammatical connection, euphony, and clearness and energy of expression.

The "New English Dictionary," edited at Oxford University by Dr. J. A. H. Murray, treating this subject says:

"The old-fashioned definition of grammar as 'The art of speaking and writing a language correctly' is from the modern point of view in one respect too narrow, because it applied only to a portion of this branch of study; in another respect it is too wide, and was so even from the older point of view, *because many questions of 'correctness' in language are recognized as outside the province of grammar: e. g.*, the use of a word in a wrong sense, or a bad pronunciation or spelling, would not have been called a grammatical mistake. Until a

not very distant date, grammar was divided by English writers into Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody, to which Orthoepy was added by some others. The division now usual is that into Phonology, treating of the sounds now used in the language, Accidence, of the inflexional forms or equivalent combinations, and Syntax, of the structure of sentences."

In defining grammar, Lindley Murray wrote "English grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety." Following the style of the STANDARD DICTIONARY, Dr. Murray gives one of the meanings of grammar as follows: "Speech or writing judged as good or bad according as it conforms to or violates grammatical rules; also speech or writing that is correct according to those rules."

If grammar can not be good or bad, as contended by the *New York Herald's* editor, then it can not be true or false. Yet Dryden wrote, "And I doubt the word 'they' is *false grammar*" (Almanzor, II. Def. Epilogue); and Macaulay writing of Frederick the Great, said: "He had German enough to scold his servants, but his *grammar and pronunciation are extremely bad*" (Essays; Frederick the Great). Again, elsewhere, "The letter may still be read, with all the original *bad grammar* and bad spelling" (History of England, IV., xviii., 245). Both phrases are permissible. Compare BAD.

grammatical error: A common locution, but "an error in grammar," is to be preferred as avoiding

what is sometimes considered a violation of grammatical precision.

grant. Compare ACCORD.

grass, go to: A vulgar imperative meaning "get away" or "clear out!"

grass widow: A common term of disparagement applied to a woman abandoned by or separated from her husband: a term which is not used by persons of refinement and one that, if used at all, should be applied only with great care.

grass widower: A term used to denote a husband who lives apart from his wife or one from whom the wife is temporarily absent.

gratitude, thankfulness: Gratitude, from the Latin *gratitudo,* from *gratus,* kind, is a sense of appreciation of favors received, as indicated by actions. It is the actual feeling, of which *thankfulness,* or the fulness of thanks, is the mere outward expression. It is therefore quite possible, and indeed often the case, for a person who at one time is *full of thanks* to show subsequently a want of gratitude.

great. Compare BIG.

groom should not be used for "bridegroom."

grouchy: A slang term for sulky or disgruntled.

grow sometimes used for *become* is gaining the sanction of usage; as, "to *grow* smaller." In this sense *grow* has been used by such masters of English as Steele, Gray, Johnson, and Macaulay.

guess, suppose, think, conjecture : Words sometimes used incorrectly. We *guess* when we are content to hazard an opinion based on data which are admittedly insufficient, but we *suppose* when we have good ground for assuming a thing to be true. When we *think*, we give thought to a matter on which we yet admit the thought has been insufficient to furnish us with exact or certain knowledge. *Thinking* is allied to *conjecturing*, in which, though holding a pronounced opinion, this falls short of absolute *conviction.* We *guess* the outcome of an event, but *suppose* that an event which has happened may result in good. We *think* that a certain medicine may effect a cure, but if we have tried it successfully before for a similar complaint, *conjecture* that it will, although not being absolutely sure that the conditions are precisely the same we are not *convinced* and do not *know.*

gums. Compare RUBBERS.

H

habit, custom, usage : Discriminate carefully between these words. In strict usage *habit* pertains exclusively to the individual; *custom* to a race or nation of people, as, the *customs* of the Jews. *Usage* refers particularly to habitual practise or something permitted by it or done in accordance with it.

had better, would better : Although according to grammatical rule *had better* is incorrect, it has

been used by writers of correct English and it may be found repeatedly in the English Classics. Therefore, it is generally considered good usage and preferable to *would better* which, though correct, is seldom heard and usually considered pedantic.

had, have : In such a phrase as "*Had I have* heard of it," the verb *have* is redundant, for *had* here is used elliptically for *if I had*, and carries the contingency to the past. Care should be taken to avoid such locutions as the example given which is one of a class that stamps those who make use of them as grossly ignorant.

had ought : The use of any part of the verb *have* with *ought* is a vulgarism. Not "I *had ought* to have written," but simply "I *ought* to have written"; not "He *hadn't ought* to have done it," but "He *ought not* to have done it."

had rather, had better : Forms disputed by certain critics, from the days of Samuel Johnson, the critics insisting upon the substitution of *would* or *should*, as the case may demand, for *had;* but *had rather* and *had better* are thoroughly established English idioms having the almost universal popular and literary sanction of centuries. "I *would rather* not go" is undoubtedly correct when the purpose is to emphasize the element of choice or will in the matter; but in all ordinary cases "I *had rather* not go" has the

merit of being idiomatic and easily and universally understood.

I *had rather* be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. *Ps.* lxxxiv. 10.

If for "You *had better* stay at home," we substitute "You *should better* stay at home," an entirely different meaning is expressed, the idea of expediency giving place to that of obligation.—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

"*Would rather* may always be substituted for *had rather*. *Might rather* would not have the same meaning. *Would* and *should* do not go well with *better*. In one instance *can* is admissible. 'I can better afford,' because *can* is especially associated with *afford*. We may say *might better*, but it has neither the sanction, the idiomatic force, nor the precise meaning of *had better*."—SAMUEL RAMSEY, *Eng. Lang. and Gram.* pt. ii. ch. 6, p. 413.

hail, hale: *Hail* is pronounced as *hale* (robust; sound) but should be distinguished therefrom, although for that word there is an alternative spelling *hail*, which, however, is rarely used. *Hale* is from Icelandish *heill*, sound; *hail* is from the Anglo-Saxon, *haegel*, frozen rain.

hain't: A common vulgarism for *have not, haven't*, and made worse, if possible, by being used also for *has not* or *hasn't;* as "I *hain't*," "He *hain't*," etc. "I *haven't*," "He *hasn't*," are permissible, "*haven't*

I?" "*hasn't* he?" are acceptable in conversation. But when the subject precedes in the first person singular and the plural, it is preferable to abbreviate the verb; as, "*I've not*," "*you've not*," etc.

half: Inasmuch as in equivalent terms of the whole there can not be a single *half*, but must be two *halves*, one should speak of dividing (the whole) into two or into halves rather than of cutting (it) in *half*.

half-cock, to go off at: A colloquial phrase denoting "to speak before one is ready"; not used by persons accustomed to refined diction.

handful: This word has for a plural *handfuls*. "Two *handfuls* of flour" means a handful taken twice, whereas *hands full* means both hands full. This last term is often erroneously written *handsful*.

handy: Properly said of articles on which one may lay the hand, or possibly of persons, as attendants, ready at hand for service. Applied to neighborhood, "near," "near by," "close at hand," or the like are to be preferred.

hang: This verb has for its perfect tense and past participle two forms, *hanged* and *hung*; but in the sense of execution (*sus per col*), the former term is alone correctly used, whereas in other senses the latter is applied. Thus, one may say, "A hat is *hung* on a peg, but a murderer is *hanged* on the gallows," and *not* that the hat is hanged *nor* that the murderer is hung.

hanger on: A colloquialism for "a dependent or parasite:" the term is inelegant and therefore undesirable.

hangs on: As a substitute for "remains," the expression finds no favor.

happen. Compare TRANSPIRE.

happen in, to: A colloquialism often met in rural districts and used for "to make a chance social call," or "to drop in casually" as one passes by.

happiness. Compare PLEASURE.

hard case: An American colloquialism for a person of pronounced or curious type.

hardly. Compare SCARCELY.

hardy. Compare RUGGED.

hasten, hurry: Although both words imply a celerity of action, the former presupposes consideration and is not opposed to good order, whereas the latter is indicative of perturbation and a measure of irregularity. Therefore these terms are not synonymous. Phelps in his "English Style in Public Discourse," says "the first does not imply confusion; the second does." Lexicographers do not restrict the meaning of *hurry* to "to confuse by undue haste or suddenness," but define it as "to cause to be done rapidly or more rapidly; accelerate." You *hasten* to congratulate but *hurry* to catch a train.

have: On the use of this word the STANDARD DICTIONARY says: Used in the past tense following

another past tense, a use often indiscriminately condemned, though sometimes proper and necessary. (1) *Improper construction.* Where what was "meant," "intended," or the like was, at the time when intended, some act (as of going, writing, or speaking) *future* in its purpose and not *past*, and therefore not to be expressed by a *past tense;* as, "He meant *to have gone*," for "He meant *to go*"; "I meant *to have written* to you, but forgot it," for "I meant *to write*," etc.; "I had intended *to have spoken* to him about it," for "I had intended *to speak*," etc.; "I should like *to have gone*," for "I should have liked *to go*." The infinitive with *to* expresses the relation of an act as so conceived, so that both analogy and prevalent usage require "meant to go" instead of "meant to have gone." Such construction, although occasional instances of it still occur in works of authors of the highest literary reputation, and still often heard in conversation, is now generally regarded as ungrammatical.

(2) *Proper construction.* The doubling of the past tenses in connection with the use of *have* with a past participle is *proper and necessary* when the completion of the future act was intended before the occurrence of something else mentioned or thought of. Attention to this qualification, which has been overlooked in the criticism of tense-formation and connection, is especially important and imperative. If one says,

"I meant *to have visited* Paris and *to have returned* to London before my father *arrived* from America," the past infinitive in the dependent clause is necessary for the expression of the completion of the acts purposed. "I meant *to visit* Paris and *to return* to London before my father *arrived* from America," may convey suggestively the thought intended, but does not express it.

have seen, seen, saw: In combining words that denote time always observe the order and fitness of time. Do not say "I *have seen* him last month; say, rather, "I *saw* him *last month*." Nor say, "I *seen* him *this week*"—a common error in grammar among the careless; say, rather, "I *have seen* him *this week*," a form that should be used also, instead of "I *saw* him *this week*."

he, she, her, him, etc.: Pronouns often used incorrectly; inexcusable errors in the educated, which are illustrated by such expressions as "If I were *him* (or *her*), I would," etc. It should be "If I were *he* (or *she*), I would," etc.

healthful, healthy: Discriminate carefully between these words. A *healthful* thing is one efficacious in promoting or causing health; *healthy* denotes condition or characteristics; as "a *healthy* child"; "a *healthful* climate."

heap: A word sometimes used to designate a "large number." A *heap* is "a collection of things

piled up so as to form an elevation"; any other application of the word is colloquial.

hearty: As applied to the appetite is so common at this day that it seems perhaps hypercritical to object to it; and the dictionaries of course give the sense, for it is the lexicographer's duty to record the language as it exists *not* as it ought to exist. That is *hearty* which proceeds from the heart; to extend the sentiment to the appetite, or to a meal, or to its eater, as is done by common usage, seems taking a liberty with the word, and applying a fine and expressive term to a comparatively unworthy object.

heir: Pronounce without aspirating the *h*. Distinguish between *heir apparent* and *heir presumptive*. The former is "one who must by course of law become the *heir* if he survive his ancestor"; the latter, "one whose present legal expectation of becoming heir may be defeated by the birth of a person in near degree of relationship." Thus, a man may to-day be *heir persumptive* to his bachelor brother who by marriage may in a year's time become the father of a son, who will then become *heir apparent;* and by this circumstance the claims of the former *heir presumptive* are quashed.

The STANDARD DICTIONARY says: "*Heir* is often colloquially applied to one who receives or is to receive a property by will. In legal terminology such a person is a *devisee* or legatee, not an *heir*." As

an *heir* does not exist till death either by will or operation of law, it is only by impropriety of speech that one talks of the heirs of the living.

help has the meaning of "assist"; it has also the somewhat opposed meaning of "prevent, hinder, or refrain from." This veiled negative makes the correct application of the word difficult. Take, for example, the sentence "Make no more noise than you can *help*." I can not *help* doing a thing is I can not refrain from doing it: that is, I can not *not* do it, which means I must do it. The correct form of the sentence just given is shown by filling in the ellipsis, whence it appears that *not* should also be supplied: "Make no more noise than (such as) you can (*not*) *help* (making)." *Help* includes *aid*, but *aid* may fall short of the meaning of *help*.

hence, thence, whence: As in meaning these words embrace *from* it is pleonastic to precede them by the word thus implied. Do not say, "go from hence," "from thence he went to Rome," "from whence did you come." *From* is redundant in all these sentences.

hen-party: A vulgar term for a social gathering of ladies. Compare STAG-PARTY.

herd: A term sometimes applied indiscriminately to persons as well as beasts. *Herd* is correctly used to designate, "a number of animals feeding or herding together;" when applied to persons the

true designation is "a disorderly rabble," or "the lower classes," as the vulger *herd.*

him and me: It is a vulgar error to use the objective for the nominative. One should not say, "Him and me are going to Bermuda," say, rather, "He and I (or preferably 'we') are going to Bermuda." Do not say, "Between *you and I,*" but say, "Between *you and me,*" or "Between *us.*"

hire. Compare LEASE.

holocaust: A term sometimes misused owing to a lexicographical error which attributes to the word the meaning of "any great disaster." According to this the Johnstown Flood, the Galveston storm, and the fire in the Paris bazaar all were holocausts, but this is erroneous. *Holocaust* is derived from the Greek *holos,* entire, whole, and *kaustos,* burnt, and its principal meaning is "a sacrificial offering burnt whole or entirely consumed." Figuratively, the term may be applied to destruction by fire, as the burning of the steamer "General Slocum" in the East River, New York, or the great fire in Baltimore, but not to loss as by shipwreck or collision unless attended by fire.

holy: The word means not only "morally excellent" but also "set apart for the service of God"; and therefore the criticism that "to keep *holy* the Sabbath day" is a meaningless injunction as every

day should be kept *holy*, is without merit. The word is derived from the Anglo Saxon and means "whole"; and the divine direction as to the Sabbath is, therefore, simply that the day be observed in its integrity.

holy mackerel: An inane expression commonly used to denote surprise and one to be avoided by all persons with pretentions to refined diction.

hoodoo: A colloquialism designating any person regarded as bringing ill luck, as a "Jonah," on shipboard, in allusion to the Bible story of the prophet Jonah.

horde: This word means "a gathered multitude of human beings; a troop, gang, or crew; as the *hordes* of Cambyses." It is never correctly applied to things. Do not speak of a *horde* of rubbish.

horse sense: A colloquial phrase designating "rough common sense" used by W. D. Howells in "Hazard of New Fortunes," vol. i. p. 4.

how? should never be used for "What did you say?" Nor in making a *request* for the repetition of any statement not heard clearly or not readily understood. Condemned by Oliver Wendell Holmes in "A Rhymed Lesson," st. 43.

"Do put your accents in the proper spot;
Don't—let me beg you—don't say "How?" for "What?"

how is an adverb, but it is sometimes most inelegantly used as an interjection and very improperly used as a conjunction, which it is not. On

this subject the STANDARD DICTIONARY says, "*How*, as an adverb, may be used as an interrogative or a relative in any of its senses. In old or vulgar usage it is sometimes nearly equivalent to the conjunction *that:* either (1) alone, as, he told me *how* he had been left an orphan; or (2) in the phrases *had that* and *as how;* as, he told *how that* he saw it all; he told me *as how* I angered him."

however: As an adverb *however* has proper and elegant use as, "*However* wise one may be, there are limits to one's knowledge." But its use for *how* and *ever* as, "*However* could he do it?" should be avoided as a vulgarism; while its employment in the sense of "at any rate; at all," as in the example, "He tried to keep me, but I'm going, *however*," is provincial and archaic.

As a conjunction it should not be used indiscriminately, as it often is used, for *but* or *notwithstanding*. Not "He was sick; not, *however*, so seriously as he thought," but "He was sick, *but* not so seriously," etc.; since the relation is sharply adversitive. "And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. *Notwithstanding* (not *but*) they harkened not unto Moses"; since the preceding thought is represented as no impediment to the succeeding one. "I have not seen her since our quarrel; *however* (not *but*, or *notwithstanding*), I expect to be recalled every hour"; since the relation is one of concession and simple

transition, *however* denoting that "in whatever manner or degree what precedes is valid, what follows nevertheless stands firm."—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

hung should never be used for *hanged*. Beef is *hung;* a murderer is *hanged*. Compare HANG.

hunk, to get: A vulgar phrase for "to get even" or "to retaliate upon."

hunky or **hunky-dory:** Slang terms that should not be used for "all right"; "safe"; or "done satisfactorily."

hurry. Compare HASTEN.

I

I, and me: "They had come to see *my sister and I*" is a common error. In this sentence "they" stands in the nominative case, and "my sister *and I*," being the objects of the action of the nominative "they," should be noun and pronoun in the objective case. To be correct the clause should read "my sister *and me*." "They have come to see *my* sister *and me*."

ice-cream, ice-water: Common English idioms sometimes condemned as incorrect. The STANDARD DICTIONARY recording usage recognizes the forms *ice-cream* and *ice-water* as correct. Inasmuch as *iced* means "made cold with ice; as *iced milk* or *iced tea*," it would seem that by analogy the correct phrases should be *iced cream*, *iced water*, for one would not

think of asking for *ice tea* or *ice milk*, but these idioms are so firmly established that it is doubtful if they will ever be changed.

idea. Compare OPINION.

ie, ei: The rule governing the use of these letters in spelling is commonly expressed "I before E except after C." Therefore, remember *believe* is correct, not "beleive"; *receive* and not "recieve"; *brief*, and not "breif"; *reprieve*, not "repreive"; *retrieve*, not "retreive."

if, or: Do not say "seldom *or* ever," say, rather, "seldom *if* ever," or "seldom *or* never."

if, whether: Sometimes *if* is incorrectly used for *whether*. It is used correctly when supposition or condition is implied; *whether*, chiefly when an alternative is suggested or presented. "If he sends the money I shall then decide *whether* or not I will go."

ill: The STANDARD DICTIONARY says: The use of *ill* and *sick* differs in the two great English-speaking countries. *Ill* is used in both lands alike, but the preferred sense of *sick* in England is that of "sick at the stomach, nauseated," while in the United States the two words are freely interchangeable. Still Tennyson and other good writers freely use *sick* in the sense of *ill*. The tendency of modern usage is to remand *ill* and *well* (referring to condition of health) to the predicate. We say "A person who

is *ill*," rather than "An *ill* person"; "I am *well*," but not "I am in a *well* state of health." *Ill* in the abstract sense of *bad* or *wicked* is obsolescent, or rather practically obsolete except in poetic or local use. Compare ILLY.

illusion. Compare DELUSION.

illy: This word should never be used for *ill* since ill is both an adverb and an adjective. Say, "He behaved *ill*"; not "he behaved *illy*." Illy is now obsolescent.

immerge. Compare EMERGE.

immigrant. Compare EMIGRANT.

imminent. Compare EMINENT.

immunity and **impunity** are sometimes confounded. They are both from the Latin, the former being produced by *in*, not, + *munus*, service, and the latter by *in* + *pœna*, punishment. Freedom from any burden, or exemption from evil, duty or penalty has perhaps not unnaturally, been associated with freedom from punishment. A boy may insult his brother with *impunity* but can not expect to enjoy a like *immunity* from strangers.

impending. Compare EMINENT.

imperative, imperious: Discriminate carefully between these words. That which is *imperative* may be either mandatory or authoritative; while that which is *imperious* may be domineering or overbearing.

implicate. Compare INVOLVE.

inaugurate: Phelps declares that this word in the sense of "introduce" is improper and restricts its meaning to "investiture in office." But lexicographers disregard this distinction and declare that *inaugurate* may be correctly used to mean also "to set in operation; to initiate; to originate; as to *inaugurate* reforms."

"Indeed!" "Is that so?" Discriminate carefully between these terms. "*Indeed*" expresses surprise. "*Is that so?*" like "you don't say?" implies disbelief and calls for the reiteration of the statement made. As these interrogations are used chiefly to discredit or disconcert the speaker they may be characterized as specimens of "refined" rudeness.

indentation, indention: An *indentation* is a notch in an edge or border; it is also a dent; and *indention* is a setting of type in such manner as to leave a blank space on the left side of a margin of type-matter as at the beginning of a paragraph.

The printers' *indention* is not (as it is often said to be) a shortened form of *indentation*, but an original word from *dent* (*dint*), "a denting in, a depression," and hence is the proper word, rather than *indentation*, to express the idea.

indices: A plural form of *index*, generally and more properly reserved for use in science and mathematics. In other cases the plural *indexes* should be used.

indict, indite: Although the pronunciation of these words is identical their meanings, in modern practise, differ materially. Both words are from the Latin *in* + *dico*, say. The first means to prefer an indictment (or formal written charge of crime) against. The second means "to put into words in writing" but it does not carry with it, the legal signification of the preceding.

induction. Compare DEDUCTION.

inferior: In constant and approved use in such expressions as "an *inferior* man," "goods of an *inferior* sort"; corresponding to such expressions as "a *superior* man," "materials of *superior* quality"—all of which may be regarded as elliptical forms of speech. In reply to Dean Alford's challenge of this usage (*Queen's English* ¶ 214, p. 82), it is enough to say that life would be too short to admit of all such ellipses, being supplied, even if such supply would not make speech too prolix for common use.

inform. Compare POST.

ingenious, ingenuous: Words sometimes used erroneously. *Ingenious* characterizes persons possessed of cleverness or ability; ready, skilful, prompt, or apt to contrive. *Ingenuous* means free from guile; candid; open; frank.

in, into: Discriminate carefully between these words. *In* denotes position, state, etc.; *into*, tendency, direction, destination, etc.

inkslinger : A vulgar term for a journalist, writer, or literary worker, and as such one to be avoided.

innumerable means "that cannot be numbered." Therefore, avoid such a locution as "an *innumerable* number," as absurd.

in our midst : An undesirable and ambiguous phrase for "among us" due to the misinterpretation of "in the midst of us," "in the midst of them" (*Matt.* xviii, 20) but with some literary authority for its use.

in so far as : In this phrase the word *in* is redundant and meaningless. Do not say, "*In so far as* I dared, I spoke the truth." Omit the *in.*

in spite of : A phrase which some persons declare not synonymous with *notwithstanding*, yet the STANDARD DICTIONARY authorizes its use and says, "formerly in contempt of; now, notwithstanding: used somewhat emphatically."

intend, mean : The use of *intend* for *mean*, as in explanatory sentences, is not commonly approved although it has the sanction of literary usage, and is considered correct by lexicographers who in defining the words treat them as interchangeable. When explaining anything that has been said it is preferable to say, "By this I *mean*," rather than "By this I *intend*." Do not say "Do you *mean* to come?" when you wish to know whether or not the person you address *intends* to come. Compare CONTEMPLATE.

in the street, on the street: Distinctions between these phrases are invariably wiredrawn. Both forms are permissible; the writer's preference, which may be modified according to circumstances, is for the first. "His home is *in* Eighty-seventh street" is preferable to "*on* Eighty-seventh street." One should not say "his home is *on* Bermuda," but "*in* Bermuda." "He lives *at* Hamilton, *in* Queen street." Compare ON.

invest: Properly used only of considerable transactions, and always with a suggestion of permanent proprietary right. One does not *invest* (except in a humorous sense) in a postage-stamp.

invite: Used in the sense of "invitation" this term, a colloquialism formerly in wide use, is condemned as illiterate and bordering on vulgarity.

involve is to be distinguished from **implicate.** The latter has a suggestion of wrong-doing or crime, whereas the former contains no such implication.

irritate. Compare AGGRAVATE.

irruption. Compare ERUPTION.

I seen him: Vulgar and incorrect; say "*I have seen* him" or "I *saw* him."

Is that so? One of a class of vulgar phrases of which other examples are "You don't say"; "Don't you know"; "You know"; "Well I never," commonly used but all of which should be avoided as ill-bred and undesirable locutions.

is, are: The correct use of these words depends in a measure on the intention of the writer or speaker. Therefore, the choice of a singular or plural verb in cases where either form would be proper is often influenced by the writer's way of looking at the subject. "The purpose and conception of the scheme *is* to do good." Now the mistake with this sentence is that either "purpose and conception" represent a single idea (in which case they may, in combination, take a singular verb), or they do not (in which case they require a plural verb), and that in the former case, where the nouns express a similarity of sentiment, one of the words is superfluously used. "Jones and Smith *is* solvent": yes, as a firm, though as individuals they *are* solvent.

it: Used sometimes in such manner as to violate the principles of grammatical and rhetorical construction, as when referring to any one of several words or clauses preceding, or perhaps to some idea merely implied or hinted at in what has gone before, as in the following: "A statute inflicting death may, and ought to be, repealed, if *it* be in any degree expedient, without *its* being highly so." In this sentence "if *it* be" should be replaced by "if *such repeal* be," and "*its*" should be omitted.

In general, personal and relative pronouns with ambiguous reference to preceding words or clauses

in the sentence are stumbling-blocks of inexperienced or careless writers.

ivories: A slang term used to designate the keys of a piano; hence, the phrase, **tickle the ivories**, a coarse way of expressing ability to play the piano.

J

jag: Formerly a provincialism for "a load of hay"; now a euphemism for "drunk"; but as such a term to be avoided in polite society.

jar: Used in the phrase "Doesn't (or wouldn't) it jar you" is an erroneous use of the word *jar* in vogue among persons addicted to using the vulgarisms of the street. To jar is "to cause to shake as by a shock or blow; to jolt"; *not*, to disconcert or discompose.

jaw should not be used as a synonym for "mouth" or "talk." Such expressions as "Hold your jaw"; "Shut your jaw," and "What are you jawing about?" have no place in the vocabulary of persons of refinement.

Jew, Hebrew, Israelite: These terms are sometimes incorrectly used as synonyms. *Hebrew* is the ethnological and linguistic name, *Israelite* the national name, and *Jew* the popular name of the people; as, "The Egyptians oppressed the *Hebrews*"; "David was the typical king of the *Israelites*"; "The *Jews* revolted under the Maccabees." The three

names have their special application to the people in the premonarchical period (*Hebrew*), in the monarchical period (*Israelite*), and in the period subsequent to the return from the Babylonian captivity (*Jew*).

jewels, jewelry: Words, sometimes, but mistakenly, used interchangeably. *Jewels* forming the stock in trade of a jeweler are termed collectively *jewelry*; the articles of adornment, as gems and precious stones, worn by a lady are her *jewels*.

jiggered, to be : A form of minced oath sometimes used as an equivalent for "to be hanged" ; as, "I' ll be jiggered if I do " : an inelegant form of oath common among Englishmen.

join issue : Not to be confounded with to **take issue**. To *take issue* means "to deny" ; to *join issue*, in strict usage, "to admit the right of denial," but not also "to agree in the truth of the denial." In the example "In their career father and son meet, *join issue*, and pursue their nefarious occupation in conjunction," *join issue* is improperly used for "agree" or "come to an agreement." To *join issue* is properly "to take opposite sides of a case," etc.

jollier : A slang term used to designate a person who treats another (from whom he expects a favor, or with whom he desires cordial relations) pleasantly and good-humoredly, or in an agreeable way so as to obtain his end. In its English sense a *jollier* is one given to chaffing and joking at another's expense.

jolly. Compare NICE.

jolly, to : The occupation of a jollier : slang of widespread usage. Compare JOLLIER.

josh : A vulgarism for "chaff," "hoax," or "banter," which are more refined terms.

journal : From the French, properly means *daily*. Therefore to speak of a "daily *journal*" is absurd. Say, rather, "daily *paper*." Likewise avoid "weekly *journal*," "monthly *journal*," "quarterly *journal*" which mean weekly daily, monthly daily, quarterly *daily*, and are forms of expression in popular use as examples of violent catachresis. Say, rather, "daily newspaper," "weekly newspaper," "monthly" or "quarterly magazine" or "review," or simply "monthly" or "quarterly."

jump at or **to :** To embrace eagerly, as an offer or opportunity. In this sense never "jump to," but one may *jump to* the floor, as from a chair.

just going to. Compare GOING.

K

kettle of fish, pretty : A colloquial phrase for "a perplexing state of affairs," or "a muddle," both of which are preferable expressions.

key, quay : Exercise care in the use of these words. A *key* is that with which something is opened or disclosed; also, a small low-lying island; a *quay* is a wharf or landing place where ships discharge passen-

gers or cargo. These words are pronounced alike. Compare DOCK.

kibosh : A slang term for "humbug." **To put the kibosh on,** a slang phrase for "to put an end to or stop anything."

kick is not used instead of "protest" by careful speakers, notwithstanding the fact that George Eliot introduced it into literature (see *Silas Marner*, ch. iv. p. 52). The term is slang.

kid: A common vulgarism for "child" and as such one the use of which can not be too severely condemned.

kid on : A vulgarism used in England for "humbug; hoax; or, try to induce one to believe something that is not true:"—**no kid, no kidding** : Vulgar terms for "without any humbug." Undesirable locutions.

killing. Compare PERFECTLY.

kinder : For *kind of*, pronounced as one word, is merely a low vulgarism. The same remark holds of **sorter** similarly used for "sort of." See KIND OF.

kindness : When used in the plural is sometimes objected to on the ground that *kindness* is an abstract noun. "He wishes to express gratitude for many *kindnesses.*" Nothing is commoner than the making of abstract nouns into concrete in this way; "affinities"; "charities"; "His tender *mercies* are over all His works." Besides, by "many *kindnesses*" is meant,

not "much kindness," nor "great kindness," but "kindness manifested in many forms or shown on many occasions, many acts of kindness."

kind of is an American provincialism for *somewhat* and has no literary authorization. "I am somewhat tired" should be substituted for "I am *kind of* tired." Again, after *kind of* do not use the indefinite article. "What *kind of* man" is preferable to "what *kind of* a man."

kind of, sort of : Indefinite phrases used by some lexicographers to introduce definitions; as "a *kind of* bird"; "a *sort of* box." If the subject treated be a bird of some species or a box of a specific make it is best usage to describe first what it is and then to follow with the characteristics; as, "a bird of the swallow family," "a cage-like box," etc.

king-pin is not a desirable substitute for "chief man" or "person in charge." As a colloquialism it should be avoided.

kinsman. Compare RELATION.

knife, to : This term should not be used as a substitute for "stab" or "defeat." Although widely used by politicians in the United States the term has no justification outside of ward politics.

knock, to : Slang for "to harass or find fault with continually;" a similar and more recent word used also in this sense is **hammer.** Both should be avoided.

L

lady : The use of this word as "a mere distinction of sex is a sheer vulgarism." Never say "A man and his *lady*," but "a man and his *wife*," or preferably, by name, "Mr. and Mrs. John Smith." Where woman, as indicative of sex, is intended, say *woman*—not *lady* or *female*. A female is equally female, whether person or beast. In the United States "woman" is preferable; in England "lady" is used chiefly when the term is not preceded by a qualifying adjective. The word *woman* best expresses the relation of the female sex to the human race. Some ill-informed persons use *lady* for *woman* under the mistaken idea that *woman* is a derogatory term; such use is downright vulgarity. As one never hears *sales-gentleman* but salesman, therefore *saleslady* should be avoided ; say, rather, *saleswoman*.

lambaste is slang and as such should not be used as a substitute for "flog," "whip," or beat."

lassitudinous is not a desirable substitute for "languid" or "weary."

last, latter : The first of these words is not properly used of only two, since it is a superlative; the second, not properly of more than two, since it is a comparative. Notwithstanding the fact that the use of *last* for *latter* and of *latter* for *last* has had wide sanction, the present tendency is toward strict construction.

last two. Compare FIRST and TWO FIRST.

lay, lie : In discriminating the uses of these words the STANDARD DICTIONARY says: *Lay, vt.*, "to put down," "to cause to lie down," is a causal derivative of *lie, vi.*, "to rest." The principal parts of the two verbs are :

Present.	*Imperfect.*	*Past Participle.*
lay, *vt.*	laid	laid
lie, *vi.*	lay	lain

The identity of the present tense of *lay, vt.*, with the imperfect tense of *lie, vi.*, has led to the frequent confounding of the two in their literary usage. *Lay* (in the present tense) being transitive, is always followed by an object; *lie*, being intransitive, never has an object. *Lay*, in "I *lay* upon thee no other burden," is the present tense of *lay, vt.*, having as its object *burden;* in "I *lay* under the sycamore-tree in the cool shade," *lay* is the imperfect tense of *lie, vi.*, having no object; *laid*, in "I *laid* the book on the table," is the imperfect tense of *lay, vt.*, having as its object *book*. The presence or absence of an object, and the character of the verb as transitive or intransitive, may be decided by asking the question "*Lay* [or *laid*] *what ?* " The past participles of the two verbs (*laid* and *lain*) are also frequently confounded. *Laid* in tense-combinations is to be followed by a object always; *lain*, never; as, "He has *laid* (not *lain*) the book on the table" ; "He has *lain* (not *laid*) long in the grave."

The statement in present time, "The soldier *lays* aside his knapsack and *lies* down," becomes as a statement of a past act; as, "The soldier *laid* aside his knapsack and *lay* down"; "The hen has *laid* an egg"; "The egg has *lain* (too long) in the nest."

In poetic phraseology especially, the transitive *lay* (in all its tenses) is used reflexively as an equivalent of *lie*, *lay*, etc., as in the following examples:

	Intransitive.		*Transitive.*
Pres.	I *lie down*	=	I *lay* me down.
Imp.	I *lay down*	=	I *laid* me (myself) down.
Fut.	I will *lie* down	=	I will *lay* me (myself) down.
Plup.	I had *lain* down	=	I had *laid* me (myself) down.

learn, teach: Once *learn* was good English for teach, and signified both the imparting as well as the acquiring of knowledge. An example of this use may be found in Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*) and the Book of Common Prayer, but general modern usage restricts *learn* to the acquiring and *teach* to the imparting of knowledge.

least: Grammatical writers have reason on their side in objecting to the use of a superlative for a comparative. "Of two evils choose the *less*," is better than "choose the *least*." A careful speaker will observe this form. See MORE and MOST.

leather as a colloquialism for "thrash" should not be used by persons accustomed to refined diction.

lease and **hire** are loosely used interchangeably. An agent says he has property to *hire* (= *for* hire) while the tenant says he *leases* it. Strictly, the former leases and the latter hires.

leave is used transitively and intransitively, but critics have objected to the latter use on the ground that the verb *to leave* is not expressive of any occupation—does not, in fact, of itself convey any complete idea. It is true that if you speak you can speak only that which can be spoken, whereas if you *leave* you may *leave* home or any one of a thousand things; but as home (business or domestic) may be regarded as the chief of a man's possessions, it has been fancifully treated as being the one all-important subject to which unqualified leaving applies. One certainly may say with propriety "He has just left"; "We *leave* tomorrow." Avoid such locutions as "Leave me alone"; "leave her see it," as illiterate. Use *let* instead of leave.

left, to get: A slang phrase for "to be left behind; be beaten or outdone." Avoid such a vulgarism as "Did you ever get left?"

legacy. Compare BEQUEST.

lend. Compare LOAN.

lengthen, lengthy: The verb means to "make or to grow longer." Its participle *lengthened* no more

means "long" than *heightened* means "high" or *strengthened* means "strong." It is correct to say "He *lengthened* the discourse, but it was still too short"; but not to say "He quoted a *lengthened* passage from the sermon." In the latter illustration *lengthy* should be used. A sermon is *lengthy* when "unusually or unduly long" (with a suggestion of tediousness), not when it is simply "long."

lengthways, sideways, endways: Common but none the less undesirable variants of *lengthwise*, *sidewise*, *endwise*.

less. Compare FEW.

lessen. Compare REDUCE.

let her rip: Farmer, in his "Americanisms Old and New," says, this "most vulgar of vulgarisms" is used to convey the idea of intensity of action. The phrase is coarse and should not be used as a substitute for "go ahead."

level, on the: A vulgar intensive used to emphasize the fact that the thing stated is stated truthfully, or that the person spoken of is, to the speaker's knowledge, upright and "on the square." Compare SQUARE.

levy, levee: Exercise care in the use of these words. *Levy* is to impose and collect by force; *levee*, a morning reception.

liable, likely: The first of these words which is properly used as expressive of "having a tendency"

is improperly used in referring to a contingent event regarded as "very probable." Thus, though one should not say "It is *liable* to storm," but "*likely* to do so," one may say, "the building is *liable* to be blown down by the storm."

libel, slander : These are not synonymous terms. *Libel* differs from *slander* in that the latter is spoken whereas the former is written and published.

lick : An inelegant term used colloquially as a synonym for "effort"; as, "he put in his best *licks*." Say, rather, "He put forth his best efforts."

lid : A slang term for cover, hat, etc., used especially in the phrases **keeping the lid down, sitting on the lid,** political colloquialisms for closing up places of business, as pool-rooms, saloons, etc., or keeping a political situation in control.

lie. Compare LAY.

lightening, lightning : The spelling of these words is sometimes confused. *Lightening* is to relieve "of weight"; as, "to *lighten* a burden"; *lightning* is a sudden flash of light due to pressure caused by atmospheric electricity. The shorter word designates the flash of light.

like, in the adverbial sense of "in the manner of," as, "He speaks *like* a philosopher," is correctly used, but the tendency to treat this word as a conjunction (which it is not) in substitution for *as* is altogether wrong. Do not say "Do *like* I do"; say, rather,

"Do *as* I do." It is also a colloquialism, not sanctioned by good usage, to give the word the signification of *as if*, as "I felt *like* my final hour had come"; and the use of the word as synonymous for *somewhat* is a vulgarism. Say "He breathed *somewhat* heavily"—not "heavy *like*." When *like* is followed by an objective case, as "Be brave *like* him," the preposition *unto* must be supplied by ellipsis. For this reason as for the fact that *like* here has the force of a conjunction, introducing the implied phrase "he is brave," it is better to say "Be brave *as* he is."

like, love: Discriminate carefully between these words, which are often erroneously used interchangeably. A woman may *love* her children and *like* fruit, but not *like* her children and *love* fruit.

likewise. Compare ALSO.

limb, leg: There exists an affected or prudish use of the word *limb* instead of *leg*, when the leg is meant, which can not be too severely censured. Such squeamishness is absurd.

limit, the: A vulgarism designating the extreme of any condition or situation: used indiscriminately of persons or conditions.

limited: Often erroneously used for *small*, *scant*, *slight*, and other words of like meaning; as, "He had a *limited* (*slight*) acquaintance with Milton"; "Sold at the *limited* (*low* or *reduced*) price of one dollar"; "His pecuniary means were likely to remain quite

limited"—admissible if suggesting the reverse of unlimited wealth, otherwise *small* or *narrow*.

lineament, liniment: The *lineament* is the outline or contour of a body or figure, especially the face. *Liniment* is a medicated liquid, sometimes oily, which is applied to the skin by rubbing as for the relief of pain. Exercise care in spelling these words.

lip: A very vulgar substitute for "impudence."

lit in the sense of *lighted* is not used by careful speakers. Do not say "Who *lit* (but 'who *lighted*') the gas?"

lit on: A common error for "come across," "met with," which should be discountenanced. Do not say "I *lit* on the quotation by accident"; say, rather, "I came across the quotation." Nor "I *lit* on him at the fair." One does not *light* on people whom one meets.

little. Compare FEW.

loan, lend: One may raise (put an end to) a *loan* by paying both principal and interest, and another may *lend* money to do so. The use of *loan* as a verb, meaning, "to grant the loan of or lend, as ships, money, linen, provisions, etc.," dates from the year 1200 and is accepted as good English. Some purists, however, characterize it colloquial.

lobster: A slang term used originally to designate a British soldier, probably, in the phrase **boiled lobster,** from his red coat: now applied indiscriminately

to gullible persons, perhaps on account of the reputed gullibility of the British soldier.

lonely, solitary : These two words must not be confounded, for their meaning is not exactly the same, although the Latin *solitarius* is derived from *solus*, alone. *Solitary* indicates no more than absence of life or society ; *lonely* suggests the idea of being forsaken or isolated. A *solitary* person is not of necessity *lonely*, even though he take a *solitary* walk in a *lonely* place. A man is not *lonely* if he is good company to himself.

look : In the intransitive sense of "seem," this verb should be followed by an adjective, not an adverb. Thus, "he *looks* kind (not kindly)." It is otherwise in the sense of "exercising the sense of sight." Here the adverb is used to the exclusion of the adjective. "He *looks* kindly (not kind) upon the fallen foe." Actions are qualified by adverbs, but adjectives qualify what one is or seems to be.

lot or **lots :** A slipshod colloquialism for "great many" ; as, "We sold a *lot* of tickets" ; "He has *lots* of friends" ; to be avoided, as are all other vague, ill-assigned expressions, as tending to indistinctness of thought and debasement of language. Compare HEAP.

love. Compare LIKE.

lovelily : To the general exclusion of this word, *lovely* is now made to do duty both as adverb and adjective.

lovely : A valuable word in proper use, as applied to that which is adapted and worthy to win affection; but as a colloquialism improperly applied indiscriminately to every form of agreeable feeling or quality. A bonnet is *lovely*, so is a house, a statue, a friend, a poem, a bouquet, a poodle, a visit; and it is even said after an entertainment, "The refreshments were *lovely!* "—all examples of careless diction.

low-priced : Often confounded with *cheap*. A thing is *cheap* when its price is low compared with its intrinsic worth, it is *low-priced* when but little is paid or asked for it. A *low-priced* article may be *dear;* a *cheap* article may not be *low-priced;* as, "One horse was *low-priced* (he paid only $50 for it), and it was *dear* at that price; the other cost him $500, but was *cheap* at that price."

lurid should not be used for **brilliant**. *Lurid* means "giving a ghastly, or dull-red light, as of flames mingled with smoke, or reflecting or made visible by such light."

luxuriant, luxurious : These words are not identical in sense. The former signifies growth, as "hair of *luxuriant* growth"; the latter implies luxury, as "*luxurious* ease."

> "But grace abused brings forth the fondest deeds,
> As richest soil the most *luxuriant* weeds."
>
> "And send the sentinel before your gate
> A slice or two from your *luxurious* meals."

M

mad : Used for "angry" by the careless or the indifferent. A colloquialism not in vogue among persons who use refined diction. *Mad* may, however, be used correctly to designate a condition of overmastering emotion, intense excitement, or infatuation due to grief, terror, or jealousy; as *mad* with grief; *mad* with terror. Formerly used correctly as a synonym for "angry" it is now used only colloquially in this sense. *Mad*, in the present day, denotes a species of insanity.

main guy: A vulgar phrase derived from circus cant in which it designates the chief guy-rope as of a tent. It is commonly used to designate the manager of an establishment, or the person in charge of an undertaking.

make : Often used incorrectly for "earn." Do not say "How much does he *make* a week?" Say, rather, "How much does he *earn* a week?"

man. Compare GENT.

manifest. Compare APPARENT.

manner born, to the : A phrase often incorrectly written *to the manor* from a faulty knowledge of its meaning—familiar with something from birth, or born to the use or manner of the thing or subject referred to.

marine, maritime, naval, nautical : There are distinctions among these words. *Marine* and *maritime*, from the Latin *mare*, the sea, signify belonging to the sea; *naval*, from the Latin *navis*, a ship, signifies be-

longing to a ship; *nautical*, from the Latin *nauta*, a sailor, signifies belonging to a sailor or to the sailor's pursuit, navigation. A *maritime* nation must be well supplied with *marine* stores, must have a large *naval* force and be skilled in matters *nautical*.

marry: Now used correctly of both acceptance in marriage and union in matrimony : formerly condemned as incorrect.

masses : The *masses*, in the sense of the common people, the great body of the people, exclusive of the wealthy or privileged, has so entered into popular speech that the expression is now beyond criticism, although exception has been taken to it, on the ground that the subject of the mass should be specifically named. The *masses* of what?

matinee from the French *matin*, morning, is strictly a morning reception; and to talk of an "afternoon *matinée*" is therefore, if not a solecism, a contradiction in terms. Still nowadays the word is used to mean an *afternoon* rather than a *morning* reception, or entertainment.

me : "It is *I*," never "It is *me*." And so with all personal pronouns following the verb *to be* and in apposition with its subject. The same form of error is constantly made in such phrases as "She is better looking than *me*," where, if the elliptical verb were supplied, the correct construction would readily be seen to be "She is better looking than *I* (am)."

mean : A word often erroneously used. Its generic meaning is "common" and therefrom it has been accepted as meaning "of humble origin, of low rank or quality, of inferior character or grade" and is used in England as a synonym for "miserly in expenditure, stingy." In the United States it is commonly misused as a substitute for "ill-tempered; disagreeable."

mean. Compare INTEND.

means : As *means* or *some means* covers "any means," it is pleonastic to write "*by some means or another.*" For the same reason *some means or other* may be condemned; its only excuse is that "other" refers not to "means" but qualifies the word "procedure" (understood). If this form of speech is desired, the correct utterance would be *one mean or another.*

memoranda should never be used as a singular. It is the plural of *memorandum* and the distinction should always be observed in speech or writing.

me or **my going** : Erroneous combinations sometimes used by persons careless with their diction. Do not say "Instead of *me* (or *my*) *going* to London I went to Bermuda" ; say, rather, "Instead of going . . ." Here "me" and "my" are redundant.

merely : Sometimes misused for *simply. Merely* implies no addition; *simply*, no admixture or complication; *e. g.*, "The boys were there *merely* as spectators; it is *simply* incredible that they should have so disgraced themselves" ; "It is *simply* water."

midst : The STANDARD DICTIONARY has the following : "In our, your, or their *midst*, in the *midst* of us, you, or them : a form pronounced analogically irreproachable by Fitzedward Hall, in *Modern English*, p. 50, but objected to by some authorities." Dr. William Mathews is one of these. In his work on "Words : their Use and Abuse," he asks "Would any one say 'In our middle?' . . . The possessive pronoun can properly be used only to indicate possession or appurtenance."

mighty used as a synonym for *very*, *exceedingly*, or *extraordinarily* is colloquial but borders on the vulgar. "*Mighty* fine," "A *mighty* shame," "*Mighty* doubtful" are phrases to be avoided.

misspell : Do not write this word *mispell*. Its component parts are *mis* + *spell*, and it retains the double *s*.

mistakable : Although formerly correctly *mistakeable* this word does not now retain the "e" after the "k"—an evidence of spelling reform along lines of least resistance due probably to phonology.

mistaken : Originally *mistake* meant "to take amiss, misconceive, or misunderstand," and on this account some persons claim that *you are mistaken* means "you are misunderstood"; and that when this observation is made it expresses precisely the reverse of the meaning that the speaker desires to convey. According to them to tell a man he is *mistaken*,

that is, misunderstood, is a very different thing from telling him that he mistakes or personally misunderstands.

The STANDARD DICTIONARY treating this word says: The anomalous use of *mistaken* has naturally attracted the attention of speech-reformers; we ought to mean, "You are misapprehended or misunderstood," they tell us, when we say "You are *mistaken*," and if we mean "You are in error," we ought to say so. But suppose the alleged misuse of *mistaken* gives rise to no misunderstanding whatever—that everybody, high or low, throughout the English-speaking world, knows what is meant when one says "You are *mistaken*"—in that case, to let alone seems to be wisdom. The corruption, if it be one, has the sanction not only of universal employment, but of antiquity.

mitten : An obsolete substitute for glove now revived as a colloquialism in the phrase **to get the mitten**, that is "to get the glove with the hand withdrawn : said of a rejected suitor for a lady's hand." An allied phrase is **to give the mitten to.** None of these is used in polite society.

moment, minute : These words are not exactly synonymous. A *moment* is an infinitesimal part of time; as, "in a *moment*, in the twinkling of an eye" (I Cor. xv. 52). A *minute* is the sixtieth part of an hour. One does not take a *minute* to wink the eye.

monetary. Compare FINANCIAL.

moneys, not **monies**, although often so (improperly) spelt. The rule is clear. Words ending in *y* necessarily have as their penultimate letter either a vowel or a consonant. If a vowel the plural is formed by adding *s;* if a consonant by changing the *y* into *ies*. Thus, *boy*, *boys; baby*, *babies*.

money to burn : A slang phrase used to denote possession of ample means.

more : Superlatives are often used, though improperly in a comparison of two. "He is the *more* promising pupil of the two"—not *most*. Certain scrupulously careful writers, as Augustine Birrell, will even write "the *more* part," instead of the customary "the *most* part"; and this usage, though possibly pedantic, is in other respects to be commended.

more strictly correct : A pleonasm. A correct statement may for the sake of emphasis be qualified as *strictly correct*. If "more strictly correct" is good grammar then "most strictly correct" would be also. Both sentences are erroneous.

more than probable : That which is *probable* is likely to happen, but that which is *more than probable* is almost sure to happen. To object to "more than probable," as some persons do, one would have to show that "probable" was absolute and incapable of degrees of comparison, whence of course it is a matter of common observation that some things are highly probable, while others are barely so. That a

lover of truth will speak the truth is highly probable, whereas that a confirmed liar will do so is so little probable that the probabilities are on the other side.

'most : Often used colloquially but incorrectly for "almost" ; an inexcusable and unwarranted abbreviation. Do not say "my work is *most* done " ; say, rather, ". . . is *almost* done." *Most* is used occasionally and correctly for "very"—a use that some writers condemn as incorrect but which is sanctioned by literary usage. Shakespeare says : "So, Sir, heartily well met, and *most* glad of your company."—*Coriolanus*, iv. 3.

most is well used as a superlative. *Most* perfect, thorough, intense, complete, extraordinary, are in common use and have the support of literary usage.

Frederic Johnston says : "Concerning the phrase 'most perfect' some question might be raised. 'Perfect' means, literally, 'made through, to the end,' 'utterly finished,' therefore, of supreme excellence. In that case, 'more' and 'most' perfect are meaningless. We are to remember, however, that the literal is not always the true meaning of a word. Thus 'melancholy' does not mean full of 'black bile,' but 'gloomy' for any reason. Moreover, it has of late been pointed out by the best authorities that the true sense of a word is not what it *ought* to mean, but what it *does* mean, in the mouths and ears of the upper half of the people. And there can be little doubt that 'perfect,' in this case, merely expresses great rather

than supreme excellence. We may even say, further, that the word in its original sense could not be used without a qualifying word (as 'nearly perfect' for example) in a world in which nothing is utterly free from defect. To go about saying that things are 'nearly perfect' would be gross pedantry."

For the sanction of literary usage see the quotations:

"It would be strange, doubtless, to call this the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say, only, that it seems to us the *most perfect* of its kind as a piece of poetical composition strictly so called."
—CARLYLE, *Essay on Burns*, referring to his poem "The Jolly Beggars."

"Our battle is more full of names than yours,
Our men *more perfect* in the use of arms."
—SHAKESPEARE, *2 Hen. IV.* iv. 1.

"*Most perfect* goodness." —*Cymbeline* i. 7.

mought : Although recorded by the dictionaries as the imperfect of "may" and often used for *might*, the use is one which does sufficient violence to euphony to be characterized as undesirable.

muchly : Although formerly in vogue is now obsolete and stigmatized as slang, and as such to be avoided.

mug : A vulgar characterization for the human face.

murderous should not be used for "dangerous" or "deadly."

music. See CHIN.

Mussulman : The plural of this word is formed by adding *s*—Mussulmans *not* Mussul*men*. Here the word "man" is no component part of *Mussulman*

mutual, common : These words are often confounded and have been so by writers of correct English. *Mutual* implies interchange; *common* belonging to more than two persons. Before the middle of the eighteenth century, *mutual* had two meanings: "joint" or "common;" and "reciprocal." When Dr. Samuel Johnson published his great dictionary he gave it but one meaning, that of *reciprocal*, and, his authority as a scholar having grown so great, this meaning became considered the only one which might be correctly given to the word. "*Mutual*," says Crabb, "supposes a sameness in condition at the same time; *reciprocal* supposes an alternation or succession of returns." Thus we properly speak of "our *common* country, *mutual* affection, *reciprocal* obligations." While *mutual* applies to the acts and opinions of persons, and therefore to what is personal, it is not applicable to persons. Macaulay condemned the phrase "*mutual* friend" as a low vulgarism. A "*common* friend" is certainly more accurate but unfortunately carries with it the disagreeable idea of inferiority, and probably for this reason is seldom or never used. There is authority of such prolific writers as Scott and Dickens for "*mutual* friend," but the rapidity with which they wrote their books may suggest that they paid little heed to such refinements of language as did Macaulay. Yet centuries of English literature authorize the employment of *mutual* in the sense of *joint* or *common*.

On the other hand, the very strong disapproval with which this and like uses of *mutual* are regarded by many writers of good taste may not unreasonably be considered as sufficient ground for avoiding *mutual friend* and kindred expressions. "*Mutual* friends," says Phelps, "would not be accurate" meaning that two persons are friends each to the other.

my. Compare ME.

myself : An emphatic pronoun sometimes misused for "I" or "me"; as, "The property was willed to my wife and *myself*." For "myself" substitute "to me" and the sentence is correct. "Myself" is used correctly with a reflexive verb, that is, one whose object, expressed or implied, denotes the same person or thing as the subject; *e. g.*, "I will control *myself*."

N

nasty : This word should not be applied to that which is merely "disagreeable," as *nasty* weather, for strong terms should not be robbed of their significance by being applied to conditions which could only be referred to in such terms by exaggeration. A pigsty is properly termed *nasty*, as there filth finds its habitat, and an obscene book is *nasty* as morally foul.

naught. Compare OUGHT under AUGHT.

need, needs : As an adverb *need* is now obsolete; *needs* means "necessarily." Do not say "as *need* he must," say, rather, "as *needs* he must."

neglect, negligence : The meanings of these words are sometimes confused. *Neglect* is the act of failing to perform something, as a duty or task, to leave undone; *negligence* is the *habitual* omission of that which should be done. *Negligence* is a trait of character while *neglect* may result from preoccupation. Fernald in "Synonyms, Antonyms, and Prepositions," says: "*Neglect* is transitive, *negligence* is intransitive; we speak of *neglect* of his books, friends, or duties, in which case we could not use *negligence.*"

negociate, negotiate : The first, now obsolete, was the spelling formerly in vogue; the second is the correct spelling of to-day.

neither, either : For "none" and "any one," is not the best usage; "That he [Shakespeare] wrote the plays which bear his name we know; but . . . we do not know the years . . . in which *either* (correctly, *any one*) of them was first performed"; "Peasant, yeoman, artisan, tradesman, and gentleman could then be distinguished from one another almost as far as they could be seen. Except in cases of unusual audacity, *neither* (correctly, *no one*, or *none*) presumed to wear the dress of his betters."

neither, nor : In considering these words the STANDARD DICTIONARY says : "As disjunctive correlatives, each accompanied by a singular nominative, often incorrectly followed by a plural verb form; as,

'*neither* he *nor* I *were* (correctly *was*) there.'" *Neither*, that is, *not either*, means not the one nor the other of two. "Through diligence he attained a position which he *neither* aspired to *nor* coveted"—the proper correlative to use here is *nor*.

nerve : A slang term sometimes used as a substitute for "impudence," "over-assurance" or "independence," any one of which is preferable.

never, not : While literary authority sanctions the use of *never* for *not* in cases where a lapse of considerable time is thought of, as, "I shall be there—*never* fear" (for *do not* fear now, or at any time in the interim, that I shall disappoint you), it does not justify its use in a sentence where the time referred to is momentary or short. The emphatic use of this adverb in the sense of not a single one, not at all, is perfectly good, as instanced by Coleridge—"And *never* a saint took pity on my soul in agony." But the usage will not sanction an extension to things which, from their very nature, could take place—as, say, death—but once. Thus, do not say "Robert Fulton *never* invented the steamboat"; say, rather, "Robert Fulton *did not* invent the steamboat." "Paul Jones *was never* born in the United States" is incorrect. Say ". . . *was not* born in the United States." Do not say "I met him to-day but he *never* mentioned the subject." Say, rather ". . . but he *did not* mention the subject."

never so : Often misused for *ever so* from which it should be carefully discriminated. *Never so* means "to an extent or degree beyond the actual or conceivable; no matter how." In common use *ever so*, meaning no more than "very" or "exceedingly," is often confounded with and used for *never so*.

never mean : A common slip of the tongue in such phrases as "I *never mean* to" which is frequently used when "I *mean never* to" is intended. Compare DON'T.

nibs : A vulgar title given usually satirically, to a person in authority; as "His *nibs* sailed to-day" : a term to avoid.

nice : This word has undergone a peculiar transformation in sense. Derived from the Latin *nescius*, ignorant, and originally meaning "ignorant, silly, weak," it has now come to signify "characterized by discrimination and judgment, acute, discerning; as, a *nice* criticism." The word has, however, also been used colloquially in the sense of "pleasing, jolly, or socially agreeable; as, a *nice* girl," and the use has been condemned but is too well established to be abandoned.

nicely as a colloquialism for "very well"—as "He is doing *nicely*"—should be avoided.

nifty : A vulgarism for "stylish."

nightly, nocturnal : These words do not have the same signification. The one means night by night,

the other happening at night. A man has *nightly* sleep in which he suffers from *nocturnal* dreams.

no : According to critics *no* never properly qualifies a verb, that is, it should never be substituted for "not." But the practise has literary sanction.

no : Often used for "any" by the illiterate. Do not say "We didn't see *no* flats"; say, rather, "We did not see *any* flats."

nobby : A vulgar synonym for "having an elegant or flashy appearance; showy; stylish" : haberdasher's cant. Compare NIFTY.

nohow : A vulgarism for "in no way" or "by no means." If after a negative, say "in any way," "by any means," "at all." "I don't believe in them *nohow*" should be "I don't believe in them *in the least*," or "*at all.*"

nominate : Distinguish from "denominate," which is now only an obsolete sense of the word. To *nominate* is to designate or specify; as, "Is it so *nominated* in the bond? " whereas to "denominate" is to give a name or epithet to. Washington was *nominated* president, but was *denominated* "Father of his country."

nominatives : The coupling of singular and plural. What number, singular or plural, shall the verb take. It couples two sentences—one on either side—the one having a singular nominative and the other a plural. As to which sentence shall be first and which second, there is commonly but little compulsion : it is a mat-

ter of choice. But should this choice affect the verb? —"The wages of sin *is* death." "Death *is* the wages of sin." It is merely a matter of taste in forceful diction which nominative shall precede. Yet which is to govern the number of the verb? "What we seek *is* riches"; "Riches *are* what we seek"—Probably these two forms of one idea best illustrate the better usage, which appears to be that the verb is dependent upon the nominative which precedes. In explanation of the scriptural phrase, it may be stated that although the prevailing rule with the translators of the Bible appears to have been to use plural verbs when either nominative was plural (that is, in all such cases), still "Death," being here that upon which special emphasis is laid and to which attention is particularly drawn, is permitted to govern the verb.

no more : Often incorrectly used for "*any* more." Do not say "I don't want to see you *no more*"; but "I don't want to see you *any more*," or "*again*."

none : Although etymologically equivalent to *not* (a single) *one* this word is commonly used as a singular under a mistaken idea that it can not be used correctly as a plural, but many writers of standard English have used it as a plural. The STANDARD DICTIONARY authorizes the use of the word both as a singular and plural according to the meaning of the context. Where the singular or the plural equally expresses the sense, the plural is commonly used and

is justified by the highest authority. "Did you buy melons?" "There *were none* in the market." "Did you bring me a letter?" "There *was none* in your box." "*None* of the three cases *have* been received" is correct. In illustrating this point the STANDARD DICTIONARY gives the following quotation: "Mind says one, soul says another, brain or matter says a third, but none of these *are* right." And says, "In the preceding quotation the 'are,' altho ungrammatical, connects 'right' with any one of the persons named—not with any one of the things named. If *is* be substituted for 'are,' 'right' may be as reasonably connected with 'mind,' 'soul,' or 'brain' as with the persons (or classes of persons) spoken of." *None* used with a plural verb is found repeatedly in such English classics as the works of Bacon and Shakespeare, as well as in the Authorized Version of the Bible.

nor, or: Discriminate carefully between these words when using them after *no* and *not*. In such a sentence as "He has *no* cash *or* credit," the word "credit" is used as an alternative for "cash," and merely, though perhaps redundantly, to amplify the thought. But if one says "He has *no* cash *nor* credit" the meaning is very different, and implies he is without both, "credit" being here considered as an additional asset. In more involved statements the distinction may be of great importance. "Will *or* disposition," "power

or faculty," may be but pairs of synonyms. The locution "will *nor* disposition," "power *nor* faculty," distinguishes the two members of a pair as different.

not. Compare NEVER.

notable : Discriminate carefully between the different meanings of this word. A *no'table* event is an event worthy of note; a *not'able* woman is one who exercises care or skill or is prudent as in housewifery.

noted. Compare NOTORIOUS.

nothing like : Not to be used adverbially for *not nearly*. Do not say "He was *nothing like* as handsome as his brother," but "He was *not nearly* so handsome," etc.

nothing to nobody : An ungrammatical phrase used for "no one's business." Say, rather, "not anything to any one."

not on your life : A vulgar phrase for "not by any means."

notorious is so commonly applied to that which is unfavorably known to the general public, as a *notorious* crime, just as *noted* is applied to that which is favorably distinguished, as a *noted* speech, that it is well not to confound the expressions, but to reserve their use for their own several functions. However, the rule is not invariably followed; for the following expression by Spencer, on "Education" is good. "It is *notorious* that the mind like the body, can not assimilate beyond a certain rate."

no use : Often incorrectly used for "*of* no use." Do not say "It's *no use* to discuss it with you," say, rather, "It is *of no use* to discuss it."

novice. Compare AMATEUR.

number should not be used with such words as *innumerable* and *numerous*, which themselves contain the idea of *number* (Latin *numerus*). Say "A *countless* number," not "an *innumerable* number."

numerous : Often misused for *many*. Do not say "*numerous* cattle were in pasture"; say, rather, "*Many* cattle were in pasture."

nutty : Used in the sense "lacking in intelligence," this word is a vulgarism to be avoided.

O

obnoxious : Formerly this word meant "liable, amenable, subject," but the meaning is sometimes forgotten in the more recently acquired sense, "odious, hurtful." This difference is beautifully illustrated by a question propounded to Dean Alford—"Which of these two is right, 'Death is *obnoxious* to man' or 'Men are *obnoxious* to death?'" Death, or the idea of death, is certainly distasteful to most men, but, this notwithstanding, all men are subject to death.

observance : Distinguish from **observation.** Though the act of observing is signified by both, it is, as regards *observance*, in the sense of holding sacred, whereas, so far as *observation* is concerned it

is in the sense of making examination or careful note. Thus there is an *observance* of the law, but an *observation* of the works of nature.

occupancy, occupation : The word *occupancy* differs only slightly from *occupation* in meaning. The first refers rather to the state or fact of possession, while the second carries with it an idea of the rights or results of such *occupancy*. The right or legal fact of *occupancy* entitles a person to *occupation* at will. One may speak of the *occupancy* of a domain and the *occupation*, not occupancy, of a region by troops.

occur, take place : These terms are not always synonymous. *Occurrences* are due to chance or accident but things *take place* by arrangement. Compare TRANSPIRE.

of : That the force of this word is not fully understood is proved by the fact that many ministers choose to omit it from the title of Scriptural books. Dean Alford in referring to the habit of announcing "The Book Genesis" instead of "The Book *of* Genesis," says, "This simply betrays the ignorance of the meaning of the preposition *of*. It is used to denote authorship, as the Book *of* Daniel; to denote subject matter, as the first Book *of* Kings; and as a note of apposition signifying *which is called*, as the Book *of* Genesis. . . . The pedant, who ignores *of* in the reading-desk must however, to be consistent, omit it elsewhere : I left the city London, and passed through

County Kent, leaving realm England at town Dover."* *Of* is also frequently misused for *from*. Nothing but custom can justify the common form of receipt, "Received *of* . . ."

of any: Sometimes used incorrectly for *of all;* as, "This is the finest *of any* I have seen; say, rather, "finer *than any other,*" or "finest *of all.*"

off of: The preposition *off*, when noting origin and used in the sense of *from* is frequently followed most ungrammatically by *of*. No well educated person would say "I got these eggs *off of* Farmer Jones," nor would they "buy a steak *off of* the butcher" but "of" or "from" him. *Off* should not be used of a person, where *from* would suffice. You take a book *from*, not *off*, your friend; who may take it *off* a shelf. You do not even, in correct speech, take a contagious disease *off* him, as though it were something visible and tangible, and were bodily removed from his person.

official: A term sometimes used incorrectly for **officer.** An *official* is one holding public office or performing duties of a public nature; usually he is a subordinate officer; an *officer* is one who holds an office *by election or appointment*, especially a civil office, as under a government, municipality, or the like.

of the name of. Compare BY THE NAME OF.

older, oldest: These terms are, according to best usage, applied only to persons belonging to different

families or to things, as, Lincoln was *older* than Hay; this book is the *oldest* in the library. Compare ELDER, ELDEST.

on is frequently used where *in* would be preferable. Fitz-Greene Halleck once said to a friend, "Why do people persist in saying *on* Broadway? Might they not as well say Our Father, who art *on* Heaven?"

once in a way (or **while**) : A colloquialism for "now and then," better expressed by a single word, as *occasionally*.

one : Used sometimes as in writing narrative instead of "I," "he," or "a." Bain ("Higher Eng. Grammar") says : "*One* should be followed by *one* and not by *he* (nor for that matter by *I* or *a*); as, 'What *one* sees or feels, *one* can not be sure that *one* sees or feels.' " To begin with *one* and to continue with any one of the substitutes suggested would not only be incorrect but would confuse the reader.

one another. Compare EACH OTHER.

one-horse : A slang term for "second rate" ; implying "of inferior capacity, quality or resources."

only : This word, whose correct position depends upon the intention of the author, is often misplaced. The examples of the uses of *only* here given will serve to illustrate correct usage. "*Only* his father spoke to him" ; here *only* means that of all persons who might have spoken, but one, his father, spoke to him. "His father *only* spoke to him" implies that his father

'only *spoke*" and did not scold him, which, perhaps, he might have felt his duty called upon him to do. "His father spoke *only* to him" means that, of all the persons present, his father chose to speak to him alone, but this sentence may perhaps be more lucidly expressed "His father spoke to him *only*."

on the level. See under LEVEL.

on the street. Compare IN THE STREET; ON.

onto : A word meaning "upon the top of," avoided by purists as colloquial or vulgar. Condemned by Phelps as a vulgarism but now gradually growing in popularity. Inasmuch as its form is analogous to *into, unto, upon*, all of which are sanctioned by best usage, Phelps's condemnation is perhaps a little premature. The word has been objected to by some critics as redundant or needless. "Considered as a new word (it is in reality a revival of an old form), it conforms to the two main neoteristic canons by which the admissibility of new words is to be decided. (See HALL, *Modern English*, pp. 171, 173.) It obeys the analogy of *in to* = *into*. It may also be held to supply an antecedent blank, as may be shown by examples. It never should be employed where *on* is sufficient; but simple *on* after verbs of motion may be wholly ambiguous, so that *on to*, meaning 'to or toward and *on*,' may become necessary to clear up the ambiguity. 'The boy fell *on* the roof' may mean that he fell while *on* the roof, or that he fell, as from the chimney-top

or some overlooking window, *to* the roof so as to be *on* it; but if we say 'The boy fell *on to* the roof,' there is no doubt that the latter is the meaning. The canons for deciding the eligibility of new words appear therefore to claim for *on to* the right to struggle for continued existence and general acceptance." So says Dr. I. K. Funk in the STANDARD DICTIONARY.

O, Oh : Although often used indiscriminately it is generally conceded that "O" is used to express exclamation or direct address while "oh" is used to express the emotion of joy, pain, sorrow, or surprise. See the examples.

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home."
"O God, whose thunder shakes the skies."

"Oh! say, can you see by the dawn's early light"—
"Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

open up is properly used to signify "explore; discover; as, to *open up* a new country," but not so in the sense of "introduce; as, to *open up* a subject." Here the word *up* is superfluous; but in this, as in the majority of cases where *open up* is used, it would be better to substitute a more specific term. See UP.

opinion is sometimes more than an *impression*, being a conclusion or judgment held with confidence, though falling short of positive knowledge. The word should therefore not be used interchangeably with *idea*, which may be a mere conception, with or with-

out foundation for its belief. One may have an *idea* of enjoyment, but hold an *opinion* on the result of a campaign.

or. Compare IF; NOR.

oral should be differentiated from **verbal.** The former applies to what is spoken by mouth, whereas the latter indicates that which has been reduced to words.

orate : A term to avoid when "speak, declaim, harangue," or a like word will express what is intended. It may, however, be fittingly used meaning "to play the orator, talk windily in round periods": it meets the canon of "supplying an antecedent blank," and is a legitimate word, especially in humorous or contemptuous use.

ordinance, ordnance : These words have no relation in common. An *ordinance* is a regulation ordained by some one in authority as a "municipal *ordinance.*" *Ordnance* is artillery, especially heavy guns, cannon of all kinds, mortars, howitzers, etc.

ornery : A barbarous dialectism for "ordinary" which can not be too severely condemned.

other : This word is often improperly omitted from general comparisons ; for instance, "All men are better than he" obviously should be "All *other* men," etc., as the person excepted of necessity belongs to the class embraced by "all men."

other, otherwise : When these words introduce a clause of comparison they should be followed by the

conjunction *than*, instead of which the words *but* and *except* are often erroneously introduced. *Than* is indeed the conjunction of simple comparison, and should be used after adjectives in the comparative degree. In better usage *else* is also followed by *than*, unless the word is introduced, as frequently, without appreciably adding effect to the sentence; as, "She did nothing (*else*) *but* weep," though even here the introduction of the unnecessary word would make *than* the preferable sequence. "He knew no *other* course *than* this"—not *but* or *except*. "It can not operate *otherwise than* for good"—not *but*. "No *quicker* did he climb the rope *than* (not *but*) back he fell."

ought. Compare AUGHT.

ought, hadn't. See HAD OUGHT.

out of sight: An intense vulgarism for "superb."

over and above, if redundant, is an undesirable expression. Avoid the addition of words to a sentence that fail to add to the sense. "*Over and above* his debts illness had now to be provided for." It were better to say "*In addition* to his debts," etc.

over, across: *Over* is sometimes misused for "across." Do not say "go *over* the bridge" when you mean *across* it.

overflowed: The banks of a river may be *overflowed;* they should never be spoken of as *overflown*. There is no verb to *overfly*, but there is one to *overflow* the participles of which are *overflowed*, *overflowing*. The

termination—*flown* used commonly by the illiterate is the past participle of *fly*. Although *flown* originally meant "flooded" the word in the sense is now obsolete.

over, not over : Opposed by some writers when used as equivalent to *more than, not more than*, but defensible as having a tinge of metaphor suggestive of overflowing quantity or overtopping height and having the support of literary usage.

overshoes. Compare RUBBERS.

over with : Avoid as incorrect all such sentences as, "When the game was *over with*, we enjoyed a cold collation." Here the word "with" is redundant.

owing. Compare DUE.

own : Some critics object to the use of this word in the sense of *confess*, but it is sanctioned by literary usage and dates from the seventeenth century. **To own up**, or **to**, in the sense of "to make a full confession" or "to admit unreservedly when challenged" is a colloquialism.

P

pack : A word sometimes misapplied especially in speaking of a number of persons; as, "the whole *pack*." It is correctly used when applied to dogs or wolves; hence, from the latter application, also to any band of men leagued together for evil purposes; as, "a *pack* of thieves": sometimes, also, correctly styled a *gang*.

pain. Compare PANE.

pair : Great care should be exercised in applying modifying adjectives to this word. Thus one may say "a new *pair* of trousers ;" "a new *pair* of scissors ;" but not "a new *pair* of shoes." There is a distinction in the use—"a new pair" as applied to gloves or shoes implies exchange of one pair for another; here, "a *different* pair" would be preferred. In general, say, rather, "a *pair* of new shoes" ; "a *pair* of new gloves." This word remains *pair* in the plural when it is preceded by a number : otherwise it takes the *s*. "Two *pair* of gloves," but "many *pairs* of trousers."

pane : Sometimes confused with **pain.** The first designates "a piece, division or compartment, most commonly a plate of window glass" ; the second denotes "a distressing or disagreeable emotion." The spellings of the two words should never be confused, but occasionally are.

pants : A vulgarism or tailor's cant for *pantaloons*, meaning *trousers* which should be the word used by preference.

paradox : Commonly used incorrectly in the phrase "a seeming paradox,"—a thing that does not exist, a paradox being a statement that seems to be at variance with common sense. A statement may, however, be characterized as *paradoxical.*

paraphernalia, from the Greek *para*, beyond, + *phero*, bring, is properly applied to the personal ar-

ticles, as jewelry, reserved to a wife over and above her dower or marriage portion, and should not be used in the sense of finery or regalia. Yet the application is common but savors of grandiloquence. The finery and regalia are not, or should not be, "over and above," but should be as of right or of good taste. Compare OVER AND ABOVE.

pare, pair : Words the spellings of which are sometimes confused. *Pare*, to remove the outer covering from is from the Latin *paro* and means "prepare"; *pair*, designating two persons or things, is from the Latin *par*, which means "equal." See PAIR.

parenthesis : The phrase *in parenthesis* includes both signs, and an expression placed between these signs is therefore said to be "in parenthesis." *Parentheses* refers only to two or more sets of parenthetical expressions. Due care should be exercised in using this word.

parson : Although a good word used to designate "the clergyman of a parish," *parson* is often used contemptuously, and from this use has acquired a sense that detracts from the dignity of the office; therefore, is one to be avoided. Do not say "Our *parson* is a popular man"; say, rather, "Our *minister* . . ."

partake should never be used as a synonym for "eat" or "drink." One may *partake of* a meal with other persons, that is, share it with them, but one does not partake a meal by one's self.

partially should not be used for "partly," as, having the meaning "with unjust favoritism," it may be misunderstood.

party, person : Except in legal terminology, *person* is preferable; *party* means, in general, an entertainment. In the legal sense, *party* is a person (or body of persons collectively) who (or which) takes a certain specified part in a legal transaction, as "A. B., the party of the first part." From this application of the term, the word has been loosely extended to mean *person*. Do not say "A certain *party*," etc., but "A certain *person*"; party in such a connection is a vulgarism.

pathos. Compare BATHOS.

patrons should not be used for "customers." A *patron* is one who fosters a person or thing; a *customer* is one who deals regularly at one establishment.

peach : Used in the sense of "beauty," possibly from the delicate and downy skin of the fruit, is a playful though undesirable expression used commonly by young men and boys, especially in referring to women; as, "Isn't she a peach!" Lexicographers do not recognize this usage of the word.

peculiarly impressive : A phrase heard sometimes for "singularly" or "strikingly impressive"; but the word is from the Latin *peculiaris,* "one's own," and it is in this respect that the individuality enters the case. What belongs exclusively to a person is *peculiarly* his;

and the sense of remarkable, as from singularity, intensity, or exceptionality, is better expressed by the word of this class best adapted to the case.

pecuniary. Compare FINANCIAL.

peel should not be confused with **peal.** The first designates "rind"; the second, "ring."

pell-mell: This word etymologically implies a crowd and confusion and is not applied to an individual. Thus, "He rushed out *pell-mell*" should be "He rushed out hastily and excitedly."

penny: In the plural this word is either *pennies* or *pence.* In the one case it means a number of individual coins; in the second case it signifies a specific sum of money.

people: Where individual persons, or a number of such, are intended, this word should be discarded in favor of *persons;* as, "most *persons* are of this opinion." People means *persons* collectively; as *"People* say."

per: This is a Latin preposition, correctly joined only with Latin words; as, *per centum,* abbreviated *per cent.; per diem; per annum. Per head* and *per person, per year, per day* are common commercial locutions; use preferably the English forms *a* head, *a* person, *a* year, *a* day. If you must use a Latin phrase be sure you use all Latin.

perfectly killing: An inane expression used commonly by women for "in stylish attire," and also,

intensely comic" or "absurd.'" Compare SPLENDID.

perform does not mean **play.** One *performs* music *on* a piano or *plays the* piano, but does not *perform* the piano. To perform *on* the piano would rather indicate "to strum" upon it or (if you like) *play upon* or *play with* it than *to play it.*

perform. Compare ASSUME.

permit. Compare ALLOW.

perpetually ; Distinguish from *continually.* There is a difference between that which is done unceasingly and that which merely takes place constantly.

person. Compare PARTY.

personalty is sometimes considered to mean articles of personal adornment. It does not. It is a legal term, now in contradistinction to *realty*, and includes therefore all movables, as money; personal property of any kind whatever, as household goods; chattels real and personal; things movable as distinguished from *realty* or landed property in any form.

persons. Compare PEOPLE.

perspicacity, perspicuity · Terms often confused. *Perspicacity* is "acuteness, clear-sightedness or penetration" ; *perspicuity* is "clearness of expression or style, lucidity" ; and is applied to speech and writing.

persuade, convince : That which *persuades*, leads or attracts (Latin *suadeo*, advise), that which *convinces*, binds (Latin *vinco*, conquer). A person when

convinced that he is wrong is *persuaded*, by justice or interest, to amend his ways.

peruse should not be used when the simple *read* is meant. The former implies to read with care and attention and is almost synonymous with *scan*, which is to examine with critical care and in detail. A person is more likely to *read* than to *scan* or *peruse* the Bible.

petition, partition : Sometimes pronounced as if they were homophones, but they are not. Exercise care in their use. A *petition* is a request, a *partition* is that which separates anything into distinct parts.

phenomenon is the singular of *phenomena*, and the distinction should be observed in speech. Avoid as incorrect such locution as "A remarkable phenomena."

piece, a : A provincial vulgarism used in such phrases as "We went along the road *a piece*" ; "he followed me *a piece*," etc.

pike : A vulgarism used as a verb for "to move away rapidly," and as a noun, contemptuously, for "a shiftless class of persons."

pillar, pillow : Discriminate carefully between these words. A *pillar* is a firm, upright, separate support; a *pillow* is a head-rest. Note the difference in the spellings.

pile-in : Slang for "get to work."

pipe-off : A vulgarism for to "take in at a glance."

pity, sympathy : Not synonymous terms. *Pity* awakens a feeling of grief or sorrow in one for the distress of another; *sympathy* is a feeling kindred with that of another for his state or condition. *Sympathy* implies a degree of equality which *pity* does not. We may *pity* one whom we disdain but we can not *sympathize* with him.

place : Used objectively without a preposition, or even adverbially, a provincialism common in parts of the United States; as, "She is always wanting *to go places*"; "Can't I *go any place* (correctly *anywhere*)?" "I must *go some place* (*somewhere*)"; "I can't find it *any place.*" Such forms are solecisms.

place, plaice : Homophones, so care should be exercised in their use and spelling. A *place* is a particular point or portion of space; a *plaice* is a fish.

plank : Used usually with "down" this term is commonly employed by persons careless of their diction for "pay out" or "lay down" : said especially of money, and a term to be avoided.

plead, pleaded or **pled, pleading :** The spelling of *pled* for the past is not warranted, and is a colloquialism. Careful speakers use *pleaded.*

pleasure is distinguished from *happiness*, although in common conversation the terms are frequently used as if they were synonymous. "By *happiness*," says Hamilton, "is meant the complement of all the *pleasures* of which we are susceptible." Crabb says,

"*Happiness* comprehends that aggregate of *pleasurable* sensations which we derive from external objects": it is "a condition in which *pleasure* predominates over pain or evil; a continued experience of *pleasures* and joys." "*Pleasure* is the accompaniment of the moderate and suitable activity of some organ or faculty of the mind."

plentiful. Compare BOUNTIFUL.

plenty: The colloquialism by which *plenty*, which is a noun, is treated as an adjective or adverb is altogether inadmissible. In such cases *plentiful* and *plentifully* should be used. "We have *plenty of* money." "Cash is *plentiful*." "We are *plentifully* supplied"—not "We have *plenty* enough cash."

plunk: A vulgarism for a silver dollar.

polite, civil, polished: *Civil*, from the Latin *civilis*, from *civis*, a citizen, denotes that which is becoming to a citizen. *Polite* is the Latin *politus*, participle of *polio*, polish. Civility is therefore negative, the mere absence of rudeness, whereas politeness is the positive evidence of good breeding. A *polite* man is naturally so, but a *polished* man is one who has, by art, acquired the smoothness which comes of having had the rough edges rubbed off. *Polite* denotes a quality; *polished* denotes a state.

politics is a singular word of plural form. "His hobby *is politics*"—not "*Politics are* his hobby."

polity and **policy** both come from the Latin *politicâ*, (Gr. *politeia*, polity, *polis*, city); but they must not be confounded. "*Polity* is the permanent system of government of a state, a church, or a society; *policy* is the method of management with reference to the attainment of certain ends. The national *polity* of the United States is republican; each administration has a *policy* of its own."

pore: Compare POUR.

possessive case, the: A very unnecessary difficulty appears to be felt, even by educated men, in the use of the apostrophe in the possessive case. It is placed immediately after the noun under consideration. If, for instance, you are talking of a lady and refer to her glove, you say "the *lady's* glove"—then the apostrophe should immediately follow the noun in question; viz., *lady*, in the singular. If, however, there are two ladies or more, you say "the *ladies'* gloves," and the apostrophe should follow *ladies;* that is, *lady*, in the plural. In like manner, you write "the *boy's* father," or "the *boys'* father," when referring to one or to two or more boys, respectively. "The *man's* hat," "the *men's* hats," with the apostrophe following the noun *man* or *men*, will note the possessive in the singular and plural for the noun *man*.

The nearest approach to a difficulty is where a plural ends with an "s" or a sibilant sound; but here the rule is still the same—place the apostrophe after

the noun referred to, that is, the plural, though for the sake of smoothness and euphony, omit the succeeding (or rather non-succeeding) "s." Thus, "the *boss's* desk" in the singular, "the *bosses'* desks," in the plural. When the singular ends in "s," the possessive "s" is usually retained, excepting where the noun has three or more syllables and the word following commences with this letter. Thus, Charles's uncle; Burns's poems; Burns's stanza; Damocles' sword. The possessive "s" is also generally omitted before "sake"—as, "For conscience' *sake*" (conscience having the "s" sound); "for Jesus' *sake*."

In speaking of a firm, where the partners constitute but one object of contemplation, the apostrophe is used but once—after the complete object of contemplation, that is, after the title or firm name; as, "Jones and Robinson's store." If Jones and Robinson, instead of being in partnership had independent businesses you would speak of "Jones's and Robinson's stores"—this being no exception to, but merely an exemplification of, the rule that the apostrophe immediately follows the noun or name (or firm name) under consideration.

Occasionally, the possessive appears in double form, the substantive being preceded by *of* and followed by the apostrophe with *s*. This occurs, however, only in idiomatic phrases, as, "He was a friend of my father's," which is equivalent to "He was one of my father's

friends" or "He was a friend of (the number of) my father's (friends)," when it may be supposed that the person spoken of possesses more than one object of the kind referred to, this double form of possessive is properly used. "It was a fault of my friend to be loquacious" would signify the one particular weakness of my friend: "It was a fault of my friend's to be loquacious," that is, "of my friend's faults," would signify that this was one of various faults.

The apostrophe is not used with the possessive personal pronouns. Write "yours (*not* your's) truly." Compare 's.

post: A colloquialism, generally undesirable, for *inform*. It is derived from the bookkeeping signification of the term, where it means that the ledger is supplied, by transfer, with the information contained in the books of original entry.

pour, pore: Exercise care in using these homophones. The first is of Celtic origin and means "to cause to flow, as a liquid, in a continuous stream"; whereas *pore* is from the Middle English *poren*, and means "to gaze or ponder with close and continued application, as in reading or studying."

power: In the sense of "a great number or quantity," this word is an undesirable colloquialism that has gained ground especially in rural districts. One may say of a man "He was a *power* among the people," but not "A *power* of people heard him."

practical : Do not confound with **practicable.** The former means "that can be put into practise or rendered applicable for use; as, *practical* knowledge"; whereas the latter is perhaps best expressed by the synonym "feasible." *Practical* has a general application, being governed by actual use and experience; as, *practical* statesmanship or wisdom : *practicable*, on the contrary, is particular, and signifies the suitability of the particular thing named to the desired end. Thus one may know a *practical* man but not a *practicable* one.

pray, prey : Exercise care in using these homophones. Etymologically they are distinct. *Pray* is from Old French *praier*, to ask; while *prey* is from Old French *preier*, booty, probably from the Latin *prædendo*, to seize. Note the difference in spelling.

precedent, president : Although almost homophones these terms have widely different meanings. A *precedent* is something that has occurred before in time and is considered as an established rule or an authorized example; a *president* is the head of a nation, society, or the like.

predicate, predict : Though these words are both derived from the same Latin source, the one must not be used for the other. To *predict* is to foretell, whereas to *predicate* is to proclaim as inherent. In United States usage *predicate*, with *on* or *upon*, is

sometimes treated as synonymous with *establish*; as, "On what do you *predicate* the assertion? "

prefer: The act or thing preferred should never be followed by *than*. *Prefer* is properly followed by the preposition *to*, or occasionally by *above* or *before*. Thus do not say "I *prefer* to talk than to dance," but "I *prefer* talking *to* dancing."

preferable: If the preference is stated in terms, as "This is *preferable* to that," the word is followed by the preposition *to*—never by *than*. The perference may, however, be implied; as, "This is *preferable*."

prejudice: Sometimes erroneously used for "prepossess" or "predispose." A *prepossession* is always favorable, a *prejudice* always unfavorable, unless the contrary is expressly stated. *Predispose* means "to dispose or incline beforehand." Therefore, we should not say that a person is *prejudiced* in any one's favor, but that he is *prepossessed* or *predisposed*.

preposition: "The part of speech or particle that denotes the relation of an object to an action or thing: so called because it is usually placed before its object." The correct use of these little words is often puzzling to persons of education. For the purpose of their guidance the following partial list is given. A comprehensive work on the subject of their correct use is "English Synonyms, Antonyms and Prepositions," by Dr. James C. Fernald.

accord *with* (neuter)
accord *to* (active)
accused *of* crime
acquit persons *of*
adapted *to* or *between*
adapted *to* a thing *for* a purpose
affinity *to* or *between*
agreeable *to*
agree *with* persons, *to* things, *among* ourselves
amuse *with*, *at*, *in*
angry *with* (a person) *at* (a thing)
anxious *for*, *about*, sometimes *on*
attend *to* (listen)
attend *upon* (wait)
averse *from*, when describing an act or state.
averse *to*, when describing feeling
bestow *upon*
boast *of*
call *on*
change *for*
compliance *with*
confer *on* (give), *with* (converse)
confide *in*, when intransitive
confide it *to*, when transitive
conform *to*
conformable *to*
consonant *to*, sometimes *with*
convenient *to* or *for*
conversant *with* persons; *in* or *of* affairs; *about* subjects
correspond *with* (by letter), *to* (similar things)
dependent *on*, *upon*
derogate *from*
derogatory *to* a person or thing
die *of* or *by*
differ *from* or *with*
difference *with* a person
difference *between* things
difficulty *in*
diminution *of*
disappointed *of* a purpose; and *in* a matter if it fails to meet our expectations.
disapprove *of*
discouragement *to*
dissent *from*
distinguished *for*, *from*, sometimes *by*
eager *in*
entertain *by* (a person), *with* (a thing)
exception is taken *to* statements; sometimes *against*
expert *at* or *in*
fall *under*
free *from*
frightened *at*
glad *of* something gained, and *of* or *at* what befalls another
grieve *at*, *for*
independent *of*
insist *upon*
made *of*, *for*, *from*, *with*
marry *to*
martyr *for* a cause, *to* a disease.
need *of*
notice *of*
observance *of*
prejudiced *against*
prejudicial *to*
profit *by*

provide *for*
reconcile *to*
recreant *to, from*
reduce *to* a state; *under* subjection
regard *to* or *for*
replete *with*
resemblance *to*
resolve *on*
respect *for*
smile *at, upon*
swerve *from*
taste *of* what is actually enjoyed; *for* what we have the capacity of enjoying.
think *of* or *on*
thirst *for, after*
true *of* (predicable)
true *to* (faithful)
wait *on* (serve), *at* (a place), *for* (await)
worthy *of*

present is to be distinguished from **introduce.** Introduction takes place among equals, but a presentation takes place by act of grace. Then the favored person is brought into the presence of some superior or other persons, be it lady or celebrity, who is graciously pleased to grant the privilege, which however does not permit the subsequent familiarity of an introduction. A man may be *presented* at court or to a reigning beauty, but he is merely *introduced* to the man who may afterwards become a college chum.

pretend is so commonly used in a bad sense that it becomes improper to use it (even in the sense of claim) for *profess;* for a profession is made only of what one is happy or proud to profess. Therefore say, "I *profess* (not I *pretend to*) skill in surgery."

pretty as an adverb may properly be used to signify moderately, tolerably, fairly, somewhat (extensively), but the expression lacks elegance and definitiveness, as is shown by the following sentence: "He is a *pretty*

sick man, but is *pretty* sure to recover, being at all times *pretty* fortunate."

prevail: In the sense of "triumph," this word is usually followed by the prepositions *over* or *against;* as, "We have *prevailed over* our enemies"; "None can *prevail against* us." In the sense of "to have effectual influence," follow it with *on*, *upon* or *with;* as, "He *prevailed on* me to go." In the sense "to have general vogue, currency or acceptance," it should be followed by *through* or *throughout;* as, "Mohammedanism *prevails throughout* Northern Africa."

preventive is preferable to *preventative*, which is a corruption of the former, has been described as a "barbarism," and is said to stamp any one using it as lacking in common education.

previous: In higher literature, the adverbial use of *previous* with *to*, in the sense of "prior to" is not favored. The adverb *previously* or the expression *prior to* is preferred.

prey. Compare PRAY.

principle, principal: Exercise care in the use of these homophones. *Principle* is a source or cause from which a thing proceeds: *principal*, first or highest in rank. Note the difference in spelling.

profess. Compare PRETEND.

promise should never be used for "assure." A *promise* always implies futurity. Do not say "He

was alarmed, I *promise* you ;" say, rather, "I *assure* you."

pronouns in the objective : Often the coupling of one pronoun with another leads a careless speaker into error, where had one pronoun only been used, no doubt or difficulty would have been experienced. "If he calls for (you and) *I*, we will go." If the words in parenthesis be omitted no one would think of saying "for *I*," but would naturally use the correct pronoun *me*. This method of elision will generally elucidate the correct usage. "To talk like that before (you and) *I* was atrocious." Say *me*, as you certainly would if you omitted the words in parenthesis.

prophecy, prophesy : Discriminate carefully between these words. A *prophecy* is a prediction, the foretelling of an event; to *prophesy* is to predict, or foretell an event. Note the difference in spelling.

proposal, as distinguished from **proposition,** refers to the difference in treatment of the matter at issue. The one invites a plain "yes" or "no," whereas the other suggests consideration or debate. A *proposal* of marriage usually anticipates an immediate reply, whereas a *proposition* for partnership involves reflection and discussion of terms.

propose, purpose : Words often used incorrectly. To *propose* is to offer; to *purpose* is to intend. One *proposes* to a young lady if one's *purpose* is to marry her. Compare CONTEMPLATE.

proven: An irregular form of the past participle of *prove* used correctly only in courts of law. The word should be restricted to the Scotch verdict of "not *proven*," which signifies of a charge that it has neither been proved nor disproved. The modern pernicious tendency among reporters is to use *proven* instead of *proved*.

providing, provided: The first of these words, which is not a conjunction, is sometimes improperly used for *provided*, which is. Say, "You may go, *provided* (*not* providing) the weather be fine."

provoke. Compare AGGRAVATE.

pull used to designate "influence" is a vulgarism of the street and the political arena that should be discountenanced. "Influence" is a better word.

pupil. Compare SCHOLAR.

push, the whole: A vulgar phrase used to designate all the persons that form a party: an Anglicism. In English slang "push" is used for "crowd" probably from the proverbial restlessness and crushing in which English crowds usually indulge.

put: For *run* or *ran;* as, "You ought to have seen him *put*"; "Then he *put* (sometimes, *put out*) for home": an archaic usage now appearing as a colloquial Americanism. *Stay put* in the sense of "remain where (or as) placed" is also an Americanism, never used (unless playfully) by correct speakers.

Q

quantity is properly applied to that which is measurable, as is "number" to that which may be counted. "A *quantity* of people"; "a *quantity* of birds," are both incorrect; substitute the word *number* in both cases.

quarter of: As applied to time this is incorrect. Such an ambiguity can be avoided by substituting *to* for *of*. For example, a quarter of seven is one and three-fourths not a quarter *to* the hour of seven; yet the phrase "quarter of" is often misapplied to time by persons of average education.

quit is sometimes used incorrectly for **cease.** You may *quit* business, but do not ask your companion to "*quit* fooling."

quite: In general *quite* means "to the fullest extent, totally, perfectly"; colloquially, it means "very, considerably." It is from the French *quitte*, meaning "discharged," being the equivalent of the English "quits," a word used in games to designate when the players are even with one another. Therefore such a phrase as "quite a number" is unjustifiable. "Number" is indefinite in its significance just as are also "few," "little," and "some." As Richard Grant White says, "A cup or a theater may be *quite* full; and there may be *quite* a pint in a cup or *quite* a thousand people in the theater; and neither may be

quite full." Yet Thomas Hughes, author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays," wrote in a letter concerning an intercollegiate boat-race "*quite* a number of young Americans." The local colloquialism "quite some" is wholly indefensible.

quite so: An undesirable locution, common in England and to some extent in America, and used to signify assent, which should be avoided. "He jabbers like an idiot." "*Quite so, quite so.*"

quite the lady: A vulgarism for "very ladylike."

R

rabbit, rarebit: The correct form of this term is *rabbit.* A *Welsh rabbit* is toasted or melted cheese well-seasoned and served on toast. This term, probably of slang origin, is analogous to *Munster plums* designating Irish potatoes, and *Glasgow magistrate,* designating a salt herring.

rag. Compare CHEW THE RAG.

raise: As a verb this is often misapplied to the bringing up of human beings. One *rears* cattle, *raises* chickens, but *brings up* children. *Rear*, meaning "to nurture and train," may also be used of children.

You may *raise* a fund for rent because the rent has been *raised;* but in speaking of this it were better to say "has been *increased.*" The colloquial use of *raise* for an increase in salary should also be avoided.

raise, raze : Discriminate carefully between these homophones. To *raise* is to cause to rise, elevate; but to *raze* is to level with the ground, as a building.

rare : In the United States *rare* applied to meat is used to designate meat that is not well done; in England, the term is used to designate meat that is not fresh.

rarely or ever : Often incorrectly used for "rarely *if* ever" : the word *seldom* is preferable.

rather : Superfluous with adjectives ending in *-ish*, when this implies *rather;* as, "*rather* warmish," "*rather* coldish." Charles Lamb jestingly made the error apparent in closing a letter with "yours rather-ish unwell." But with adjectives where *-ish* expresses quality only, not degree, *rather* is admissible, and may make a neat distinction; as, "*rather* foolish."

rattle : In the sense of "to throw suddenly into confusion" this word is a colloquialism which has much currency. *Disconcert* is a preferable term though not nearly so expressive.

read. Compare PERUSE.

real used for **very** is an undesirable colloquialism. Avoid such locutions as "*real* glad" ; "*real* smart" ; "*real* pleased." *Very* is the correct word to use.

realized should not be used for "obtained."

receipt. Compare RECIPE.

recipe refers to the thing—the *combined ingredients*—directed to be taken, and *receipt* refers to what is

taken, *i. e.*, the identical thing prescribed. The two words have thus come to acquire the same meaning, though, strictly, the doctor gives the *recipe* (thing to be taken) or formula, and the patient acknowledges the *receipt* (of the thing given).

reciprocal. Compare MUTUAL.

recollect is not the same as remember. You only *recollect* after making the effort to do so; you *remember* because you have never forgotten, therefore without effort. You *remember* the rent is due, but *recollect* the date of your friend's birth.

recommend: As a noun used instead of *recommendation*, this word is a colloquialism the use of which should be discouraged.

recourse, resource: Two words often confounded. *Recourse* means a resort to, as for help or protection; the adoption of a means to an end. A *resource* is that which one resorts to, as in case of need; the source of aid or support; an expedient. In the plural, *resources* are one's means, funds, or property of any kind, as distinguished from one's *liabilities*.

reduce, lessen: To *reduce* is to bring to a specified form or inferior condition; to *lessen* is to diminish. Do not say "to *reduce* cases in which the death penalty may be inflicted"; say, rather, "to *lessen* the number of cases, etc."

regardless is an adjective meaning "exercising no regard; heedless," and should never be used as in

the common vulgarism "got up *regardless*" which is incomplete, and which to be correct should be rendered "got up *regardless of expense.*"

relation, relative, kinsman: The distinction between these words is not commonly known. A *relation* or *relative* is one to whom another may be related by ties of blood or by law. Thus, a brother is a *relation* or *relative* by ties of blood; and a brother-in-law is a *relation* or *relative* by law. A *kinsman*, as the formation of the word shows, is a "man's kin"; that is, one of his own blood, as a brother or cousin.

relic, relict: These words, though once interchangeable are no longer so; *relict* in the sense of *relic* now being obsolete. A *relic* is a fragment that remains after the loss or decay of the rest. A *relict* is either a widow or a widower. In this sense the term, common in law, is archaic or humorous in general use.

relieve. Compare ALLEVIATE.

remainder. Compare BALANCE.

remains should not be used for "corpse" or "body."

remit: In commercial usage this word implies the discharge of an account by payment sent; and it should not generally be used as a synonym for *send.* To *remit* is "to send or place back." Thus, to forgive, release, withdraw a demand for—any of which actions may replace the recipient of the favor in his former position—is properly spoken of as *remit.* It is in this sense only that *remit* is permissible for dis-

charge of an obligation, though by payment, as this procedure places the parties in the same state as that in which they were before the obligation was incurred.

rendering. Compare RENDITION.

rendition: Although this word has the meaning of "artistic interpretation or reproduction, as of the spirit of a composer," the word *rendering* is preferably employed in referring to a delineation or interpretation in art and the drama. Describe an artistic version or a literary translation as a *rendering*, and an amount rendered or produced, as a yield of cocoons, as a *rendition*. The former specially signifies the act, the latter the thing produced by the act, though there is of course a blending point of the two which is none other than the whole.

replace: The use of this word with the sense of "succeed" has been subjected to criticism, usage decrees that to *replace* is to "take or fill the place of; supersede in any manner." To *succeed* is to "come next in order especially in a manner prescribed by law."

reply. Compare ANSWER.

reputation. Compare CHARACTER.

requirement, requisite, requisition: Whereas a *requisite* is that which can not be dispensed with, a *requirement* is rather that which is insisted on, if desired conditions are to be fulfilled. Fresh air is a *requisite* of life; the apology you ask is a hard *requirement*. My *requirements* are few; my *requisites*

but clothing, food and air. When a *requirement* partakes of the nature of a legal or authoritative or even popular demand, it then becomes a *requisition;* as, a *requisition* for accounts; to be in *requisition.*

resemble. Compare FAVOR.

reside, residence: Somewhat stately words, not to be indiscriminately used for *live*, *house* or *home.* In the legal sense, as affecting, for instance, the right to vote, a man's *residence* may be in a cheap lodging-house; but commonly the word would be understood to designate a building of some pretensions. "Where does he *live?*" is ordinarily better than "Where does he *reside?*" and to call a plain little cottage "my *residence*" is a bit of petty affectation.

resource. Compare RECOURSE.

respectfully is often confounded by the thoughtless with **respectively.** While the former means "in a respectful manner" the latter signifies "singly, in the order designated, or as singly considered." *Respectively* must also be distinguished from *severally*, the meaning of which is "separately, or each for himself or itself." For example, "The three men *severally* undertook to do the share of work allotted to them *respectively*, that is, A, B, C, each promised for himself to do work in the following proportions—A, one-sixth, B, one-third, and C, one-half of the whole."

restive: Objection has been made to the use of this word in the sense of **restless,** as commonly applied to

a horse, on the ground that it formerly meant "stubborn, balky, refusing to go." On this subject Fitzedward Hall ("False Philology," p. 97) says: "The ordinary sense of the word has always been 'unruly,' 'intractable,' 'refractory.' Proofs are subjoined from Lord Brooks, Dr. Featly, Fuller, Milton, Jeremy Collins, Samuel Richardson, Burke, Coleridge, Mr. De Quincey and Landor. As concerns a horse, however, if he resists an attempt to keep him quiet, he shows himself *restive.*"

reticule, ridicule: Two words widely different in meaning but liable to confusion when spoken hurriedly. A *reticule* is a bag-like receptacle used by ladies for carrying such articles as embroidery, needlework, etc.; *ridicule* is speech or behavior intended to convey contempt and excite laughter; wit, as of the pen or pencil, that provokes contemptuous laughter.

reverend, reverent: These words are sometimes confounded. The one is objective and descriptive of the feeling with which a person is regarded; the other is subjective and descriptive of the feeling within a person. In explanation of the difference, Dean Alford offers the following instance: "Dean Swift might be Very *Reverend* by common courtesy, but he was certainly not very *reverent* in his conduct or in his writings."

Reverend, abbreviated **Rev.** as a title, should, like *Honorable,* be preceded by the definite article, the

phrase being adjectival; as, "The *Reverend* Thomas Jones"; or, if the first name is not used, "The *Reverend* Mr. Jones"; but *Rev.* Jones," used widely in the United States, is harsh if not rude. The title or distinction of a husband is not correctly applied to the wife. Never say The Rev. Mrs Smith or Mrs. General Brown, etc.

reverse should not be confounded with *converse* *Reverse* is the opposite or antithesis of something; minus is the *reverse* of plus. The *"converse"* is "the opposite reciprocal proposition," reached by transposition of the terms of the proposition, the subject becoming predicate and the predicate subject. The *converse* of the proposition, "If two sides of a triangle be equal, the angles opposite to those sides are equal," is, "If two angles of a triangle be equal, the sides opposite to those angles are equal."

revolts: The use of this word as a transitive verb, although supported by high authority, is not favored. "This *revolts* me" is far better expressed by "This is *revolting to* me."

ride, drive: One *rides* in a saddle or *drives* in a carriage; a distinction drawn by English people but condemned as "mere pedantry without a pretense of philological authority" by Gould ("Good English," p. 84). Compare DRIVE.

rigged out. Compare TOGGED OUT.

right: In the adverbial sense of *in a great degree,*

is archaic or colloquial, except in some titles, as *Right* Reverend. Say of a thing that it is *utterly* (not *right*) nonsensical. Again, the use of this adverb in the sense of *precisely* and *without delay* is not approved by many purists, who suggest that some more suitable term be chosen. "Stand *right* there," for "Stand precisely where you are" or "stand just at that spot" is not approved; so is it also with "Do this *right* away" for "do this instantly."

right as a noun should not be used for "just cause to expect" or the verb "deserve." Thus, instead of "You have a *right* to suffer" say "You deserve (or have just cause to expect) to suffer."

right away, right off: Common and undesirable colloquialisms for "at once," "instantly."

right back, to be: An unwarranted colloquialism for "to be here (or there) again in a moment."

right man in the right place, the: It is claimed by some persons that it is impossible for the right man to be in the wrong place, or the wrong man in the right place—the result being in either case that right, or the thing desired, would not prevail. But the reverse, the exact thing not desired or the wrong, may be that which ensues—Why? Possibly because the man who was the very man to bring the transaction to a successful issue was wrongly placed, or because the thing desired, which could easily have been achieved with a certain man or type of man to do it

was attempted by a less efficient man—good perhaps for some things but not for that particular work. The poor fellows who rode so gallantly to death at Balaklava were the right fellows for the work in hand, but at that fatal moment were forced into a wrong place. The phrase expresses a felt meaning and is good, as is acknowledged when, in terms of pride and satisfaction, we refer to "the man behind the gun."

rights and privileges: To be used with discrimination. A *privilege* is "something peculiar to one or some as distinguished from others; a prerogative"; so that the term is to be employed relatively. "The *rights and privileges* of the people," as often used absolutely in political platforms, demagogical speeches, and radical newspapers, is incorrect, since the people in this sense can have no *privileges*, *i. e.*, "things peculiar to individuals." Milton's use is correct when he says "We do not mean to destroy all the people's *rights and privileges*," since he is speaking of the people relatively, as distinguished from the magistrates and the king.—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

rise: Some lexicographers claim a distinction in the pronunciation of the word *rise* as a noun and *rise* as a verb, making the noun rhyme with "rice" and the verb rhyme with "prize," but common usage sanctions only one pronunciation, that rhyming with "prize."

roast: A slang term used occasionally by journalists and members of the theatrical profession as an equivalent for "banter" or "ridicule," as in a press notice.

rooster: A word often incorrectly restricted in its meaning. This is due in a measure to usage as recorded by lexicographers. If a *roost* is a perch upon which fowls rest at night, then a *rooster* is *any* fowl which perches on a roost, be it cock or hen. But the domestic fowl is not the only bird that roosts, therefore any bird that does so, be it what it may, is as much a *rooster* as the male or female domestic fowl.

rope in, to: A colloquialism for "to cause to participate in" or in a bad sense "to swindle." In the latter sense it is used especially when the intention is to induce a person to invest in a scheme that is known beforehand to be of questionable worth.

rubber should not be used as a synonym for "crane"; nor *rubber-necking* for "craning the neck." These terms are slang which have been derived from *rubber-neck*, a playful expression said to be current among the children of Nova Scotia and used by them on April 1st instead of the more common "April fool."

rubber-neck: Slang for one who cranes his neck so as to see things that are none of his concern.

rubbers: As a rule an article of clothing should not be referred to in terms of the material of which it

consists. Overshoes, for instance, should be so styled, and not called either *rubbers* or *gums*.

rugged, hardy: Rugged in the sense of robust, as in health, is an undesirable Americanism for it means primarily "superficially rough, broken irregularly; as *rugged* cliffs." *Hardy* means inured as to toil, exposure, or want.

S

's: "The sign or suffix of the possessive or genitive case singular and of the same case plural when the noun ends in *n;* as, men's lives; children's books; shortened since the 17th century from Middle English *-es*. The apostrophe now replaces the *e*. Some words ending in a sibilant omit the *s* of the possessive to avoid the disagreeable repetition of a hissing sound. The rules formulated for this work are as follow: (1) Singular monosyllabic nouns ending in a sibilant sound (*s*, *x*, *ce*, *se*, or dental *ge*) add the apostrophe and *s*, except when the following word begins with a sibilant sound; as, *James's* reign; *Jones's* hat; a *fox'* skin. (2) Singular dissyllabic nouns ending in a sibilant sound add the apostrophe and *s*, unless the sibilant is followed by another sibilant or the last syllable is unaccented; as, *Porus'* defeat; *Moses'* face; *Jesus'* disciples; *Laplace's* theory; *Hortense's* fate. (3) Singular polysyllabic nouns ending in a sibilant sound add the apostrophe and *s* only when a principal or

secondary accent falls on the last syllable; as, *Boniface's* mistake; *Quackenbos's* Rhetoric; *Orosius's* History."—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

same: This word should not be used, as it is in commercial correspondence—in substitution for *it*. If "the same" is correctly used, a noun is implied; as "it is *the same* (referring to an illness) as he suffered from." However, do not say, "Tell me what you wish, and the *same* (meaning *it*) will be attended to." *Same* is also often used where *similar* is the proper word. A gale blowing to-day with a velocity of 60 miles an hour is *similar* to, but is not the *same* as, one that blew with a velocity of 60 miles one year ago, although it has the *same* amount of velocity.

sameness, similarity: Discriminate carefully between these words. *Sameness* is the state of being identically the same; absolute resemblance; *similarity* is likeness or partial resemblance. See SAME.

sappy: An undesirable colloquialism for "weakly sentimental; silly."

sass: Vulgar term for "impertinence"; "sauciness."

satire, satyr: Note the difference in the spelling of these words. A *satire* is a dramatic farce or medley; a *satyr* is a woodland deity.

saw, seen: In popular use, in some regions, often carelessly and inexcusably interchanged. *Saw* is the

imperfect tense of *see*, and to be used as such only; *seen* is its past participle, and the form to be used, with the proper auxiliaries, in the tenses formed with the aid of the past participle. Not "I *seen* him," but "I *saw* him"; not "I have (or had) never *saw* it," but "I have (or had) never *seen* it."

say. Compare UTTER.

says I: A vulgarism sometimes heard from even the educated: entirely indefensible.

scan. Compare PERUSE.

scarcely, hardly: These words are not strictly synonymous. *Scarcely* is applied to quantity, *hardly* to degree; as, "*Scarcely* an hour has passed since we parted"; "He is *hardly* well enough to rise."

scared of should not be used for "fearful of." It should be used only when positive alarm, absolute fright is felt.

scholar: Alliteration is probably responsible for "Sunday-school *scholar*" for although the word originally signified one who attends school for instruction, it has now come to imply one who is distinguished for the pursuit and possession of knowledge; and, as such, it is a high-sounding title for a *pupil*, who may be a mere beginner, and is supposedly under the close personal supervision of a tutor.

school: A term which, apart from its use designating an educational institution, formerly also described "a large multitude or company" but is now re-

stricted in its application to marine animals only; as, "a *school* of whales."

scrap: A vulgarism for "fight" or "quarrel."

screw loose, to have a: A slang phrase used sometimes as a substitute for "to be irrational or mentally weak."

sealing. Compare CEILING.

search me: A colloquialism used usually as a noncommital reply to an interrogatory and best rendered by a decisive answer as, "I don't know."

seasonable, timely: These terms are not synonymous. That which is *seasonable* is in harmony or keeping with the season or occasion; that which is *timely* is in good time. A thing may be timely in appearance that is not seasonable.

see, witness: These words are not synonymous. *See* is used of things, *witness* of events. Thus, we may *see* soldiers, but *witness* a review; *see* a man, but *witness* an assault.

seem. Compare APPEAR.

seldom or ever: A very common error for "seldom *if* ever." One may say "I *seldom if ever* speak so," meaning to imply doubt; thus, "I *seldom* speak so *if* indeed I *ever* do." An alternative form is "I *seldom or never* speak so," which is more emphatic and implies personal opinion, as "I speak so very *seldom or* (according to my belief) probably *never*."

semi-occasionally: A meaningless expression for "once in a while" which is decidedly preferable.

sensation should not be used for "noteworthy event."

sensual, sensuous: These are not synonymous terms. A *sensual* man is one who is given to the inordinate indulgence of his animal appetites; a *sensuous* one is one who has a warm appreciation for the beautiful and is keenly alive to sense-affecting influences.

separate: One of a class of words which are persistently misspelled. Note that it contains only two "e's", one in its first syllable and one in its last; and that "a" forms its second syllable.

serial. Compare CEREAL.

session. Compare CESSION.

set, sit: According to strict grammatical rule, *sit* when referring to posture is always an active intransitive, and *set* an active transitive. "To *sit* on eggs" has been characterized as colloquial English, but is sanctioned by the translators of the King James version of the Bible. "As the partridge *sitteth* on eggs and hatcheth them not" (Jer. xvii. 11). Shakespeare wrote "Birds *sit* brooding in the snow" (*L. L. L.* act v. sc. 2). On a poultry-farm the farmhand *sets* the hen but the hen *sits*.

settle: Do not speak of *settling* a bill unless there is some matter in dispute concerning it that requires

settlement. Under ordinary circumstances you *pay* an undisputed account.

severally. See *respectively* under RESPECTFULLY.

sewage, sewerage: These words are often confounded. *Sewage* is the waste matter which is carried off through drains and sewers; *sewerage* is the system of piping and draining by means of which the sewage is carried off.

shakes, no great: An undesirable colloquialism for "not much good," "of no great importance."

shall, will: "Often erroneously interchanged. In general simple futurity is expressed by *shall* in the first person and *will* in the second and third, while determination is expressed by *will* in the first and *shall* in the second and third. In interrogations in the second and third persons the usage is not so simple, the speaker often putting himself in the place of the one spoken to or spoken of, and using *shall* or *will*, as if for the first person."—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

Sheeny: An offensive appellative for a Jew used only by the illiterate and vulgar.

shire: As this word means *county*, do not say "county" when speaking of any "shire." "Oxfordshire" and "the county of Oxford," are correct, but not "the county of Oxfordshire."

shoal: In general this word is applied to an assemblage, a multitude or a throng, but, specifically,

it designates a number of fish that move together; as, "a *shoal* of porpoises." Compare SCHOOL.

should seem, would seem: Terms used chiefly to soften requests, orders or directions. The use of *should* in such a remark as "It *should seem* so"—implying that something suggested was correct—dates from pre-Elizabethan time. Here *would* should be substituted for *should*.

should, would: These words follow in the main the usage of *shall* and *will*, but with certain modifications required by their common use in dependent sentences. In general, in indirect quotation, *should* is to be used after a historical tense where the speaker quoted employed *shall*, and *would* where the speaker quoted *will*. Thus:

Direct quotation: "He said to me, 'You *shall* go.'"
Indirect " "He said that I *should* go."
Direct " "He said to me, '*Will* you go?'"
Indirect " "He asked me if I *would* go."

The mixture of direct and indirect is always wrong; avoid, "He asked me *would* I go."

shut up: A coarse expression often too commonly used instead of "keep quiet." Compare FORGET IT.

sideways should not be used for **sidewise**.

siege, seige: Discriminate carefully between these words. A *siege* is an investment as of a city by military forces; as, "the *siege* of Paris"; a *seige* is a flock

of birds; as, "a *seige* of cranes." Note especially the orthography of these words.

sieve, seive: Homophones of widely different meaning. A *sieve* is a utensil for sifting; a *seive* is a rush or rush-wick.

sight: As a colloquialism meaning a very great quantity, number, or amount; as, "a *sight* of people," the noun is to be avoided, as in the still more objectionable expression, "powerful *sight*," in which the adjective is altogether misapplied.

similar. Compare SAME.

sin. Compare CRIME.

since, ago: *Since* is used generally to imply time only recently lapsed; *ago*, to imply time long past. "How long *since* did he call?" "Nelson fought Trafalgar a century *ago*."

siree; sirree Bob: Vulgar and silly intensives of affirmation.

site. Compare CITE.

skidoo: Recent slang for "get out" which is to be preferred.

skin, to: A vulgarism for "to deprive by extortion or trickery; get the better of," either of which is preferable.

skunk: As applied to a person of mean disposition or of objectionable character the term is to be condemned as unsuited to polite society no matter how fittingly it may apply to the individual designated by it.

slob: A vulgar equivalent for "a careless, negligent and incompetent person," and as such one to be avoided.

so. Compare SUCH.

soap: A vulgar euphemism for "wealth"; used usually interrogatively as, "How's he off for soap?" A vulgarism for "How rich is he?" which is to be preferred.

so far as. Compare AS FAR AS.

sojourn: This term formerly obsolete has recently been revived as meaning to "have a residence, definite though temporary, in some place that is not one's home." *Sojourn* is better than *stop*, which may imply merely cessation of motion and does not express even temporary residence; more specific than *stay*, which may apply to a delay of an hour between trains or the passing of a night.

some: This word should never be used for "somewhat." In such sense, *some* is dialectal and provincial. Do not say "He has grown *some*" but "grown *somewhat*," that is "in *some* degree" or "to *some* extent." "Is he better?" "Yes, *some*:" avoid such a locution.

someone else, somebody else. See under ELSE.

some place. Compare ANY PLACE.

somewhat. Compare KIND OF and LIKE.

soppy: A vulgarism for "emotional": expressive but inelegant.

sorry, grieved: Distinguish between these words in their use. If we are *sorry*, it is for a matter concerning ourselves; but when we are *grieved*, another is in some way connected with the case.

sort of. Compare KIND OF.

sparrow grass sometimes abbreviated **grass** are common corruptions in domestic use for *asparagus*. There is no excuse but lack of education or lack of intelligence and courage to use the right word when the majority prefer the wrong for this vulgar provincialism.

speciality, specialty: These words should not be confounded. The distinction between them is clearly illustrated by the editor of the STANDARD DICTIONARY as follows: "*Speciality* is the state or quality of being special; *specialty* is an employment to which one is specially devoted, an article in which one specially deals, or the like."

spectator. Compare AUDIENCE.

spell should not be used for "period of time." Do not say "I shall stay a spell" if you mean you will 'remain *a little while*," the latter is to be preferred.

splendid: Often used indiscriminately and inanely especially by women; as in the expression "perfectly *splendid*," to express very great excellence. *Splendid* means imposing; as, "a *splendid* woman"; shedding brilliant light or shining brightly; as, "a *splendid*

sun"; "a *splendid* diamond." A heroic deed may be called *splendid* but a good story hardly so.

split or **cleft infinitive**: A form of expression in which the sign of the infinitive "to" and its verb are separated by some intervening word, usually an adverb, as in the phrase, "to quickly return": severely condemned by purists.

spondulix: Vulgarism for "money," now passing out of use.

spoonfuls, spoons full: These words have distinctive meanings. *Spoonfuls* means *one spoon* filled repeatedly; *spoons full* means *several spoons* filled once. Compare -FUL.

spout, up the: A vulgarism for "with the pawnbroker," or "out of sight."

spree, to go on a: Formerly this phrase designated indulgence in boisterous frolic and excess of drink: latterly the term has been used to denote "going on an outing for the day."

square, on the: A colloquialism for "with fair intention or with reputation for fair dealing; honest."

stake, steak: Exercise care in the use of these homophones. A *stake* is a *stick* or post, as of wood; a *steak* is a slice of meat. Note the difference in spelling.

standpoint should not be used for "point of view."

stationary, stationery: Exercise care in the use of these words. *Stationary* is remaining in one place or

position; *stationery*, writing-materials in general. These words are pronounced alike.

statue, statute: These words are sometimes confounded; a *statue* is a plastic representation of a human or animal figure as in marble or bronze. A *statute* is a properly authenticated legislative enactment, especially one passed by a body of representatives.

stay and **stop**: *Stay* is sometimes used incorrectly for *stop;* do not say "I shall *stay* in Paris on my way to Berlin," but "I shall *stop* in Paris" etc. Do not say "How long will you *stop* there?" but "How long will you *stay?*" etc. Compare SOJOURN and STOP.

step. See STOP.

stiff is used for a "corpse" only by the very lowest type of humanity.

stile, style: Exercise care in spelling these words. A *stile* is a step or series of steps on each side of a fence or wall, to aid in surmounting it; *style* is fashion.

stimulant, stimulus: The first of these words denotes that which stimulates the system, as coffee does the action of the heart. A *stimulus* is that which impels or urges on; as, "a *stimulus* to hard work is offered by the pecuniary reward it yields."

stinker: A coarse term applied to an undesirable acquaintance only by the vulgar. It is a term that unfortunately has some vogue in commercial life.

stop: The word is frequently misused, both for *step* and *stay*. "*Stop* in next time you pass" or "*stop*

off on your way down by car" are colloquial but objectionable expressions. The latter clearly means "*step off* and call in" and would be met by a simple "call in." *Stop* implies finality, and should therefore never be used in the sense of a temporary *stay*. The true meaning of the word *stop* was well understood by the man who did not invite his professed friend to visit him: "If you come at any time within ten miles of my house, just *stop*."—MATHEWS, *Words, Their Use and Abuse*, ch. xiv. p. 359.

straight, strait: Exercise care in spelling these words. That which is *straight* lies evenly between any two of its points or passes from one point to another by direct course; not curved. A *strait* is a narrow channel connecting two seas. In the plural, *strait* denotes a difficult or restricted condition; distress or perplexity.

street: According to law, land includes all above and all below. Thus a house on the land or a gold mine beneath is covered by the word land, and its possessor is entitled to both one and the other. In the same way a *street* includes the houses there built; and it is therefore not strictly correct to speak of a certain house as being *on* a certain street: it is *in* the street and is part of it. Compare ON.

stricken: As a past participle of *strike*, archaic in England, except when there is an implication in it of misfortune; as, "He was *stricken* with paralysis." In the United States *stricken*, in general application.

is not so distinctly archaic, and its use in reference to the erasure of words is very frequent; as, "It is ordered that the words objected to be *stricken* out." In the best literary usage of both countries *struck* is preferred to *stricken* when no implication of misfortune is conveyed in it. *Stricken* is the appropriate participial adjective; as, "a *stricken* man"; "a *stricken* deer."—STANDARD DICTIONARY.

string, to get on a : A harmless but inelegant equivalent for "to hoax," which is to be preferred.

subtile, subtle : "*Subtile* and *subtle* have been constantly used as interchangeable by good writers but there seems to be a present tendency to distinguish them by making *subtile* an attribute of things and *subtle* a characteristic of mind." A penetrating perfume is described as *subtile*, whereas a wily sage's predominating characteristic is *subtlety*.

succeed should *not* be used now in the archaic sense of "to make successful, promote"; as, "to *succeed* an enterprise."

succeed himself : An absurd phrase. A person who takes the place of a predecessor *succeeds* him; one who has occupied a public office for a term prescribed by law and is reelected to that office *succeeds* his own previous term of office but *not* himself.

such : This word is often erroneously used for "so." Do not say "I never saw *such* a high building"; say, rather, " . . . *so* high, a building."

such another. Compare ANOTHER SUCH.

sucker for "sponger" or "parasite" is slang of the lowest type and should be avoided by all persons of refinement.

summons: You *summon* a person to court upon a *summons*. There is properly no such verb as *summons*, the colloquial use of the term being altogether unjustifiable.

superior. Compare INFERIOR.

sure: Often misused for "surely" in the sense of "certainly." Do not say "*Sure* I'm going"; say, rather, "I'm *surely* going."

surprise. Compare ASTONISH.

sympathize with, sympathy for: The verb *sympathize* takes only *with;* the noun *sympathy*, in its secondary sense of "commiseration," is often properly followed by *for*. We have sympathy *with* one's aspirations, *for* his distress; the sound man has sympathy *for* the wounded; the wounded man has sympathy *with* his fellow sufferers.

sympathy. Compare PITY.

T

take: Often incorrectly used for *have*, especially in extending hospitality, in such a sentence as "What will you *take?*"

take on for *grieve*, *scold*, etc., like **carry on** for behave sportively may both be tolerated as colloqui-

alisms that are popular because of their irrationality, or because they require no discrimination in statement.

takes the cake. See CAKE.

take up school: An objectionable local Americanism for *begin school:* used also intransitively; as, "School *took up* at 9 o'clock": avoid this.

talent should not be used for "talents" or "ability."

talented: Inasmuch as adjectives of the participial form are justified by strict grammarians only if derived from an existing verb, this word has been caviled at by Coleridge (who denounced it as "that vile and barbarous vocable") and many literary pedants. Burke, Hazlitt, Lamb, De Quincey, Macaulay and Newman have however, spoken of "a *talented* man"; and in the face of this array of learning and authority we can raise but a modest protest in favor of the contention of the grammarians. Such formations are, however, not to be indiscriminately recommended.

talk, back. Compare BACK TALK.

tasty in the sense of **tasteful** is without authority and is considered an illiterate use. A person or his work may be *tasteful*, but his food, however savory, can be no more than *tasty*.

team: Strictly a *team* consists of two or more beasts of burden harnessed together, but in the United States the word is extended to cover "team and accessories," the latter being the harness or equip-

ment, together with the vehicle to which the animals are attached.

tell on: A common expression with children used in the sense of "to inform against a person," is derived from Biblical use (1 *Sam.* xxvii. 11). The phrase lost to literary English has now no equivalent.

temper, anger, wrath: Words in the use of which discrimination should be used. *Temper* is disposition or constitution of the mind, especially in relation to the affections or the passions; *anger* is violence or vindicated passion aroused by real or imaginary insult or injury. One may have an irritable *temper* without being necessarily angry. *Wrath* is deep, determined, and lasting anger, usually accompanied by outward expression of displeasure. *Anger* may be only inward feeling without the outward expression of passion.

tender should not be used for "give." You *tender* a payment; *give* a reception.

testimony. Compare EVIDENCE.

than as a conjunction should be used only in the case of direct comparison; as, "I esteem this more *than* that." When the comparison is merely implied, or covered by the verb, as by the verb *prefer*, *than* should not be used. See PREFER.

thanks has been condemned as an undignified colloquialism bordering on incivility; but what serious objection is there to this pithy acknowledgment of

obligation or gratitude? It has been said that Shakespeare made use of the expression no fewer than fifty-five times, and that the Bible four times contains the utterance "thanks be to God." Shakespeare's use of the word with "much" as an adjective is indeed most forcible—"for this relief *much thanks.*"

than me should never be used for *than I.* Say, "He is taller than I"; not "He is taller *than me.*"

than whom: A phrase objected to by some grammatical critics, in such locutions as "Cromwell, *than whom* no man was better skilled in artifice"; but shown to be "a quite classic expression." Formerly *than* was often but not always used as a preposition, and *than whom* is probably a survival of such usage. *"Than whom"* is generally accepted as permissible—probably because the sentence where it occurs can not be mended without reconstruction, and it has abundant literary authority.

that: In construing this word, it must be recollected that it is not only a conjunction but also a pronoun, both demonstrative and relative. The peculiarity of the word is such that it can be used more times in succession than any other word in the English language. Exception having been taken to a certain "that" found in a school-boy's exercise, it was shown that that *that* that that boy used was right. Dean Alford constructed a sentence on these lines which contained no fewer than nine *thats* in succession.

That used adverbially is wholly inexcusable. "He was *that* sick" could only be tolerated if an ellipsis such as "he was (to) *that* (degree) sick," could be supposed, but this is more than can be done; and the expression is therefore regarded as an unpardonable vulgarism. Compare AS, THAT (p. 22).

that there: An illiterate expression commonly used with the mistaken idea that the use of "there" adds emphasis to what follows, as, "*That there* man." Say, rather, "That man there" or simply, and preferably "That man."

that, who: Discriminate carefully between these words. *That* implies restriction; *who* generally denotes coordination. As an illustration of this distinction, Alfred Ayres says ("The Verbalist," p. 202), "'I met the boatman *who* took me across the ferry.' If *who* is the proper word here, the meaning is 'I met the boatman, and he took me across the ferry,' it being supposed that the boatman is known and definite. But if there be several boatmen, and I wish to indicate one in particular, by the circumstance that he had taken me across the ferry, I should use *that*." *That* ought, therefore, to be preferred to *who* or *which* whenever an antecedent not otherwise limited is to be restricted by the relative clause.

that's him: No, "that's *he*"—this is correct.

the: Before titles of honor, such as Reverend, Honorable, the definite article (though now frequently

omitted) should be used. As the title is specific and personal, this is the more necessary.

the infinitive: The particle *to* is an inherent and component part of the infinitive, and is strictly inseparable therefrom, in precisely the same way that the prefixed syllable which assists to form a compound word (as *in*constant) is a necessary part of the compound. But this *to* belongs to the present infinitive only, and properly finds no place in such expressions as "He was fool enough *to have risked* his good name." Despite the hundreds of uses of this method of expression, it is a blunder: the sentence should read "fool enough *to risk*." It is, too, on the ground of inseparability that the SPLIT INFINITIVE (which see) is so reprehensible. "To dance gracefully" should not be transposed into "to gracefully dance."

them: The use of this word as a demonstrative adjective for a pronoun is wholly unpermissible. A common error due to a desire to designate particularly the article required. Do not say "Give me *them* things"; say, rather, " . . . *those* things." However, of things previously mentioned one may say "Give *them* to me."

then: The use of this word as an adjective, as in the phrase "the *then* Bishop of York," has been questioned; but the usage is expressive and convenient, and is supported by good literary authority.

thence, whence: As these words mean "from there," "from where," they should not be preceded by the word *from* as is often erroneously done.

these is, them are: Ungrammatical phrases used by the illiterate for "this is"; "those are." The pronouns should both agree in number with the verb they govern.

these kind, those sort, etc.: Such expressions, though common, are now usually considered altogether wrong. Nouns in the singular require demonstrative adjectives also in the singular. But *this* may be used instead of *these* in collective expressions, such as "this ten years." Yet Shakespeare has many instances of this use. Thus, in "Twelfth Night" (act i, sc. 5) he writes "*these* kind of fools," and in "King Lear" (act ii, sc. 2) a precisely similar expression, "*these* kind of knaves." In "Othello" (act iii, sc. 3) he has, "*these* are a kind of men."

think, don't. See DON'T BELIEVE.

this or that much: Not elegant perhaps, but still correct or at least passable. A careful speaker would prefer to say "this much," because *much* being an adjective of quality requires, for its elucidation, not a pronoun but an adverb. It is true that in the expression "this" or "that much," the word "much" could generally, if not always, be omitted without affecting the correctness of the sentence wherein it is used; still the sense would not be precisely the same.

"This *much* I know" denotes a limitation in the extent of knowledge which is not restricted by "this I know."

threatening. Compare EMINENT.

three first, the: Incorrect for the *first three:* one may, however, correctly use three first if referring to a race, or the like, in which three of the competitors run a dead heat. Compare TWO FIRST.

through: An undesirable colloquialism for "at an end"; "finished"; generally applied to speakers who have completed an address, or to diners who have finished a meal. Both applications are marks of ill-breeding and border on vulgarity.

tickled to death: An absurd phrase used to express "greatly pleased."

till: In some parts of the United States oddly misused for *by;* as, "I'll be there till [*by*] ten o'clock."

time: Avoid such an incongruity as "Heaps of *time.*" "Plenty of *time,*" or "*time* enough" are to be preferred.

timely. Compare SEASONABLE.

tinker's dam: A colloquialism for something worthless, used usually in the phrase "Not worth a tinker's dam." Avoided in polite society.

tiny little: The use of words as mere intensives should be avoided, for by judicious selection a single word can probably be found which is capable of conveying the precise sense desired. To speak of a "*tiny*

little watch" or "a *great big* house," indicates a deplorable poverty of vocabulary. It is true that Shakespeare spoke of "the *most unkindest* cut of all"; but he made use of intensives only when the unusual circumstances of the case required them.

tired, to make one: A colloquialism for "to weary," or "reduce the patience of" as by absurd stories or silly conversation: a commonplace expression good to avoid.

to: Beware of using the preposition *to* when *at* is intended. A common error of this sort is instanced by "He was *to* school this morning." Possibly the error is made rather in the verb than the preposition, though the influencing cause of error in the uneducated does not always admit of certainty. We suggest, therefore, that the verb "to be" is used unintentionally for "to go," and that the sentence is perhaps intended to read "he *went to* school this morning." Compare AND; FOR.

togged out or **up:** An undesirable and vulgar expression for "well-dressed" or "attired in clothes that may attract attention."

to-morrow: This word is often used with different tenses, the question being raised as to whether it should be "to-morrow *is* Christmas day" or "to-morrow *will be* Christmas day." Both forms are correct. But, generally, in using this word, the supposition is that to-morrow has not arrived at the time of

speaking, and, therefore, "to-morrow *will be* Christmas day" is preferred. Longfellow (*Keramos*, line 331) says: "To-morrow *will be* another day." But the other form also has the sanction of usage, as the following quotations will show:

"To-morrow, what delight *is* in to-morrow!"—T. B. Read, *The New Pastoral*, bk. vi. l. 163.

"To-morrow *is* a satire on to-day."—Young, *The Old Man's Relapse*, l. 6.

The Bible affords numerous instances of this use of "is." Ex. xvi. 23: "The Lord hath said, to-morrow *is* the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord"; xxxii. 5: "And Aaron made proclamation and said, to-morrow *is* a feast to the Lord"; I Sam. xx. 5: "Behold to-morrow *is* the new moon"; Matt. vi. 30: "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day *is*, and to-morrow *is* cast into the oven."

Most people would say "Yesterday *was* Friday." If the thought is fixed upon the name of the day, it is better to use *is*, if upon the time future it is better to use *will be*.

toney: A vulgarism for "fancy" or "stylish," either of which is a preferable term.

touch, to: A slang term for "to borrow" not used by persons careful of their diction. Do not say "I touched him for a ten-spot"; say rather, "I borrowed ten dollars from him."

transpire is condemned by the best writers in the sense of *happen*. "The verb *transpire* formerly conveyed very expressively its correct meaning, viz., to become known through unnoticed channels—to exhale, as it were, into publicity through invisible pores, like a vapor or gas disengaging itself. But of late, a practise has commenced of employing the word . . . as a mere synonym to *to happen*. . . . This vile specimen of bad English is already seen in the dispatches of noblemen and viceroys."—MILL, *Logic*, bk. iv. ch. 5, p. 483.

truth. Compare VERACITY.

try: This word is often erroneously used for "make." Do not say "*Try* the experiment yourself" but "*Make* the experiment." An experiment can only be tried, as a speech (in its literal, that is verbal, sense) can only be spoken.

try and: A common but incorrect locution. Do not say "Try and come to-day," but, rather, "*Try to* come to-day."

tumble to: Slang for "to understand." Do not say "Do you tumble to it?" Say, rather, "Do you understand it?"

turn down: Undesirable, though perhaps expressive slang for "reject"; "ignore"; or "dismiss." In commercial circles, this expression has wide usage but is not the less inelegant and should be avoided. A proposition is quite as fully disposed of when it is

"rejected" as when it is "turned down;" besides, "rejected" should be given preference if only by reason of its brevity.

turn up: Used in the sense of to "put in an appearance" this expression has been condemned. The remark of a barrister in a London County Court that a defendant had "not turned up" caused the Judge to exclaim: "Pray do not use such slip-shod expressions." The barrister apologized. "These are high-pressure days," he said, "and since your Honor's days at the bar we have no longer time to indulge in perfect English."

twenty-three: A slang term used as the equivalent of "fade away" in theatrical and sporting circles: a recent expression the origin of which has been variously explained. Compare FADE AWAY.

two. Compare COUPLE.

two and two is (or **are**) **four**: As an abstract proposition or statement, *is* is undoubtedly correct; for four *is* two added to two, or twice two; but when two specific things are added to two others, the verb must be in the plural. In the former case we are saying that a certain single and definite result *is* attained or total given by the combination of two numbers; in the latter we say that in a given body or number of things *are* so many single or individual things. Two *men* and two *are* undoubtedly four; that is, four men *are* (constituted of) two and two. Beyond doubt,

twice one *is* two; for it can not be that two (as a single and specific number) are twice one.

two first: Of this expression James Murdock says: "The only argument against the use of *two first*, and in favor of substituting *first two*, so far as I can recollect, is this: In the nature of things, there can be only *one first* and *one last*, in any series of things. But—is it true that there can never be more than *one first* and *one last?* If it be so, then the adjective *first* and *last* must always be of the *singular* number, and can never agree with nouns in the plural. We are told that *the first years* of a lawyer's practise are seldom very lucrative. The poet tells us that his *first essays* were severely handled by the critics, but his *last efforts* have been well received. Examples like these might be produced without number. They occur everywhere in all our standard writers. . . . When a numeral adjective and a qualifying epithet both refer to the same noun, the *general rule* of the English language is to place the numeral first, then the qualifying epithet, and afterwards the noun. Thus we say, 'The *two wise* men,' 'the *two tall* men'; and not 'the *wise two* men' 'the *tall two* men.' And the same rule holds in *superlatives*. We say 'the *two wisest* men,' 'the *two tallest* men' and not 'the *wisest two* men,' 'the *tallest two* men.' Now if this be admitted to be the general rule of the English language, it then follows that we should generally say 'the *two*

first,' 'the *two last,*' etc., rather than 'the *first two,*' 'the *last two,*' etc. This, I say, should *generally* be the order of the words. Yet there are some cases in which it seems preferable to say, 'the *first two,*' 'the *first three,*' etc." Compare FIRST.

U

ugly, which signifies the reverse of beautiful or want of comeliness (actual or figurative) is colloquially extended in the United States to uncomeliness of character or personal demeanor; as an *ugly* fellow; an *ugly* beast; anger makes him *ugly*. In polite speech this usage is not sanctioned. Say "irritable," "vicious," "quarrelsome," as the disposition inclines or indicates.

un-: For the sake of lucidity the use of a negative prefix with a negative antecedent should be discouraged. Avoid such expressions as "He spoke in *no un*mistakable terms" which means, of course, "mistakable terms" the direct opposite of the speaker's intention. "*Not* an *un*kempt one among them" means that all were well kempt.

unbeknown: A vulgar provincialism used chiefly in the form *unbeknownst.*

uncommon: Used for *uncommonly:* a vulgarism meaning "to an unusual degree or extremely." Do not say "Her eyes are *uncommon* beautiful"; say, rather, " . . . *uncommonly* beautiful."

unconscionable : When used for *unconscionably* is a bad provincialism. Used also by the illiterate instead of *uncommonly;* as, "She is an *unconscionable* handsome girl"—this is bad English.

under : Much philological nonsense has been written in disapproval of the expression "*under* his signature," for which "over his signature"—that "preposterous conceit," as Gould aptly terms it—is suggested as a substitute. But it is clear that the expression is elliptical, and means "under sanction or authority of his signature." "*Under* oath" is good enough to impress upon an unwilling and prevaricating witness the distinction between perjury and a lie, and that although he does not physically lie *under* the oath.

understand should not be used as an expletive with interrogatory inflection, as a contraction of "*Do you understand?*" There is no excuse for this nor for its objectionable iteration. Avoid such absurdities as: "Grammar, *understand,* is the science that treats of the principles, *understand,* that govern the correct use of language," etc. *See* is also misused in the same manner.

unique : As this word implies "being the only one of its kind" it should never be preceded by "very" which implies degree. On this subject the STANDARD DICTIONARY says: "We may say *quite unique* if we mean absolutely singular or without parallel but we can not properly say *very unique.*"

United States: Under this designation the several states comprising the American Union are known collectively as one great nation. As such the expression is singular and accordingly is correctly followed by a verb in the singular.

universally by all: A common error. Where anything is done *universally*, it must be done *by all*, and these words being redundant should be omitted.

universe should not be used where *earth* is intended. If one desires to say of a certain person that he "thinks he owns the *earth*," one should certainly be careful to limit his vast possessions and not extend them to the *universe*. The latter embraces all comprised in space. "No doubt, there is a *universe;* but the word means all created things, as a whole; not only our entire solar system, but all the other systems of which the fixed stars are but the centres."—E. S. GOULD, *Good English, Misused Words*, p. 83.

unless. See WITHOUT.

unwell, owing to its common euphemistic application, should not be used for "ill."

up: In general the word *up*, used in such a phrase as "Open up" or "He *opened up* his sermon with a parable" is redundant and should be omitted. Compare OPEN.

up against it: A colloquial expression used as the equivalent of "face to face with" some condition or thing, usually of a discouraging or disastrous char-

acter. Though common in commercial circles it is an expression that it is best to avoid.

upon: Often used for *on* in such phrases as "call *upon*," whether meaning *visit* or *summon*, and "speak (or write) *upon*." The reasonable tendency now is to use the simpler *on* whenever the idea of superposition is not involved.

usage. Compare HABIT.

use: This word is used in all sorts of incorrect and inelegant ways; yet the conjugation of the verb is positive and very simple—*use; used; using.* There appears to be no difficulty in applying it affirmatively but when used in a negative form one often hears such uncouth expressions as "You *didn't use* to," "you *hadn't used* to " instead of "You used not to," etc. It need scarcely be said that these expressions are vulgarisms of the worst type. "I usedn't to" is not pretty, but is less formal than "I used not to," and can not be objected to on grammatical grounds.

usually. Compare COMMONLY.

utter as a verb should be distinguished from *say*, as articulate expression is differentiated from written. To *utter*, save in the legal sense, is to emit audibly. Adjectively the word can be used only in an unfavorable sense for "complete." *Utter* discord there may be, but *not* utter harmony; *utter* silence, but *not* utter speech.

V

vain, vein: Words of similar pronunciation whose spelling is sometimes confused by the careless. *Vein* is the Latin *vena*, blood-vessel, from *veho*, carry, and is therefore totally distinct from *vain*, which is from the Latin *vanus*, empty.

valuable is occasionally misused for *valued*. *Valuable* is said correctly only of things that have monetary value or derive worth as from their character or quality. One may have *valued* friends and *valuable* art-treasures, but *not* valuable friends nor valued art-treasures.

venal, venial: Discriminate carefully between these words. One who is *venal* is ready to sell his influence or efforts for some consideration from sordid motives; he is mercenary. But one who is *venial* has committed only a slight or trivial fault. A man who has sold his vote for preferment is a *venal* politician; a starving man who has stolen a loaf of bread for his family has been guilty of a *venial* offense.

ventilate should not be used for "expose" or "explain."

veracity, truth: Do not confound these words. *Truth* is applied to persons and facts; *veracity* only to persons and to statements made by them. One should not speak of the *veracity* of anything that has occurred. A man of integrity may have a reputation

for *veracity;* if so, there is no doubt that he told the *truth* or that the account he gave was *true.*

verbal nouns, especially such as could be replaced by a noun pure and simple, etymologically coordinate, should be preceded by a possessive in sentences of this character: "The cause of Henry ('*s*) dying was appendicitis." *Dying* is here equivalent to *death;* and we should (if we substituted the pronoun) certainly say "the cause of *his* dying" rather than "the cause of *him* dying."

verse: The chief meaning of this word is a single line of poetry; sometimes it is used as a synonym for *stanza.* Some grammarians advocate the use of *verse* instead of *stanza,* and the familiar character of the word seems to argue in favor of this use.

very: Excepting where a participle is used solely as an adjective, it is now thought to be more grammatical to interpose an adverb between the participle and this word. Thus, "*very greatly* dissatisfied" is preferred to "very dissatisfied," whereas "*very* tired" is accepted as correct. Compare REAL.

vest: In the sense of waistcoat, this word, which is in better usage a synonym for *undervest,* is not used by precise speakers.

vice. Compare CRIME.

vicinity should not be used for "neighborhood."

visit: A term sometimes misused. Do not say "The actor has just *visited,* with much abuse, the

head of the critic," when you mean that he abused him roundly. This is an erroneous application of the word, which is confounded with the Scriptural usage "to send judgment from heaven upon" as punishment.

vocation. Compare AVOCATION.

W

wa'n't: A contraction of *was not*, or improperly of *were not;* as, "He *wa'n't* (or they *wa'n't*) at home": a common vulgarism.

want and **need** are not synonymous terms, although both denote a lack. *Want*, however, refers more properly to a personal conception of shortcoming or shortage, whereas *need* denotes the matter of fact. Thus a delinquent son may *need* castigation, while he distinctly does not *want* it. *Want*, therefore, signifies a wish to supply what is lacking. But the word *want* is sometimes less strong than *need*, for a covetous man *wants* (*i. e.*, desires) many things he does not *need* (or things for which he has an absolute necessity). "I *need* assistance or I shall drown." Again, "I *want* a position, but do not *need* it, because I can continue as I am without it; but when resources fail I shall *need* it."

want of: An undesirable colloquialism. Do not say "What does he *want of* a yacht?" say, rather, *want with*, or "*What need* has he *of* a yacht?"

warm : A slang term used for "rich," formerly in rogue in England.

warm, not so : A vulgar phrase applied to persons and meaning usually "not as important" or "not as accurate" as the person to whom the epithet is applied may think himself to be.

was, is : These terms are sometimes confused, especially in dependent sentences that state unchanging facts. Then *the present tense* should be used in the dependent sentence notwithstanding the fact that the principal verb may denote action in *the past.* Say, "He *said* that space *is* (*not* was) infinite"; "We *assert* that life *is* everlasting."

watch, observe : These words have a similarity of meaning, but *watch* expresses a scrutiny or close observation which is not implied by the latter. You *observe* a preacher's manner but carefully *watch* a thief. When you *observe* intently and concentrate your entire thoughts upon the thing observed you *watch.* You *observe* the hour of day but *watch* the time lest you lose your train.

way or **'way**, as an abbreviation of the adverb *away*, as "*'way* out West," is an impropriety of speech. Say, rather, "He has gone (or is in the) West."

ways, for **way** : In the sense of "space or distance," the erroneous form *ways*, for *way*, is often used colloquially, perhaps originally through confusion with the suffix *-ways;* as, "The church is a long

ways from here," which should be "The church is a long *way*," etc.

weary. Compare TIRED.

weather, under the: In the sense of "somewhat ill," as though depressed by the weather, this is a colloquialism better avoided.

went: This word should never be used as a participle; say, "He *went*" or "he has *gone*" instead of "he *has went.*" Never use *went* after any part of the verb *have.* Do not say "I *have went* there often"; but "I *have been* there often." *Went* should never be used for *go.* Some illiterate people say "I should *have went*" when they mean "I should *have gone.*"

were her: Often used incorrectly as in the sentence "If I were *her.*" Say, rather, "If I were *she.*" Her is the objective case; here the nominative *she* should be used.

wharf: E. S. Gould declares that as *dwarves* would be an improper plural for dwarf, so is *wharves* for wharf. However, both forms are now admitted. Compare DOCK.

what: As *what* is both antecedent and relative the use of the antecedent with this word is wrong. "All *what* he said was false" should be corrected by the elision of "all." *What* is used only in reference to things, whereas *that* can be said of persons, animals, and things, and can be substituted for it.

what was, what was not: "What was" and "what wasn't my surprise" may both be used correctly to express considerable surprise, and with almost the same meaning, the one expression differing from the other but by a shade in sense. "How great was my surprise," and "What surprise could equal or be greater, than mine," would about paraphrase the usages. The former sentence implies great surprise, but the possibility (though unreferred to) of a greater; the latter indicates that there could not be any greater surprise

wheels in the (or **his**) **head, to have:** A slang phrase used as a substitute for "to be eccentric, peculiar, or erratic."

whence: "*Whence* came you" is sufficient and correct. "From *whence*" is pleonastic, the *whence* being nothing less than "*from* where" and thus including the *from*. Compare THENCE.

where: The prepositions *to* or *at* should never end a sentence beginning with *where*. Such use is vulgar and illiterate. Avoid: "*Where* has he gone *to?*" "*Where* was I *at?*"

whereabouts: This word, plural in form, but singular in construction, always takes a verb, in the singular. "Husband and wife disappeared; their whereabouts *is* a mystery."

wherever: This word, although a combination of two words "where" and "ever" is not spelt "where

ever" when written as a solid word. Then it drops the first "e" in "ever" and is correctly "wherever."

whether: Avoid such a locution as "whether or no," which is rapidly gaining ground, and say instead the preferable phrase, "whether or not." *Whether* properly means "which of two." Therefore, in expressing doubt, make mention merely of the exact thing doubted without using the word *whether* unless it be to introduce an alternative subject of doubt or a comparison of doubts. Just as *either*, which is strictly applicable to two only is wrongly applied to more than two, so is *whether*, which is a contraction of *which of either*.

which. Compare THAT, WHO.

who: Often improperly used for *whom*: a mark of ignorance when so applied. Do not say "*Who* do you refer to?" but "To *whom* do you refer?" Not "*Who* is that for?" nor "Who did you give it to?" but "For *whom* is that?" "To *whom* did you give it?" Compare THAT, WHO.

whole, whole of: The *whole* or *whole of* should be used before a plural noun carefully, and then only when the body is referred to collectively. In general the word *entire* would better express the phrase. In such cases *all* should never be employed, as this relates to the individual of which the body is composed. Thus, one may say, "The *whole* staff accompanied the general," or (for emphasis) "The *whole of* the staff," etc., but it would be better to say "The *entire* staff."

If referring to the individual officers, the sentence should read "*All* members of the staff accompanied the general."

whole push, the. See PUSH.

widow woman: A pleonasm. Do not use the word *widow*, which applies only to a woman, with the words *woman* or *lady*. It is an error of speech, common in rural districts, against which it is wise to continually guard.

wife. Compare LADY.

wild: A colloquialism for "angry" which is to be preferred.

windbag: A coarse term for a boastful and wordy talker: not used by persons who cultivate a refined diction. "Braggart," "braggadocia," are more elegant, yet equally expressive terms.

with, and: A nominative singular is sometimes used with an objective after *with* to form, jointly, the subject of a plural verb; as "The captain *with* all his crew *were* drowned." But according to best usage the conjunction *and* is substituted for "with"; thus, "The captain *and* all his crew *were* drowned." Where the objective is separated parenthetically by commas, a verb in the singular is used; as, "Aguinaldo, with all his followers, *was* captured by Gen. Funston."

without: This, as used for "except" or "unless" is at the present day a vulgarism. "*Without* you intend business, do not call"; say, *unless*.

witness. Compare SEE.

woman. Compare LADY.

worse: An adverb sometimes used for *more;* as, "He disliked tea *worse* than coffee": a vulgarism.

worst kind: For *much* or *extremely;* as, "I need (or want) a new pen the *worst kind*": a vulgarism, besides equivocally suggesting "the worst kind of a pen."

would better. Compare HAD BETTER.

would say: A hackneyed expression used by many commercial correspondents; inelegant and useless.

would seem should not be used for "seems."

wrath. Compare TEMPER.

write you: This expression, for "write to you," though common, is not grammatically correct. Where an object is expressed the dative "to" may be omitted. "He shipped *me* costly fabrics," for "he shipped costly fabrics to *me*" is permissible, but "he shipped *me*" without any objective, or rather other objective of *me* would imply that the person speaking had been shipped. Of the expression "I will write you," the only justification for it that can be found is in the supposition that the words "a letter" are understood.

Y

yappy: A slang term used as an equivalent of "foolish" which is to be preferred.

yes: Discard such vulgarisms as *yeh* and *yep* and pronounce as a single syllable, and not with affecta-

tion, as, sometimes in England *ya-as*, or with a Yankee drawl *ye-es*. Avoid, too, the objectionable habit of using this word as the sole response in conversation; a habit which is indeed fatally destructive of conversation, which should partake more or less of an interchange of ideas. "Yes! she would reply encouragingly . . . and 'yes!' conclusively, like an incarnation of stupidity dealing in monosyllables." (MEREDITH, "Beauchamp's Career," vol. iii. ch. 10, p. 185.) Also, when speaking in English do not inject the German "Ja!" when you wish to signify assent. This practice is rapidly gaining ground among the middle class.

Yid : A Jew: an appellation common among the vulgar and therefore one to be avoided.

you even when used in relation to one person, is still grammatically plural, always requiring the plural verb; as, "You *were* fortunate," not "You *was* fortunate" ; "If you *were* to curse you would sin," not "If you *was* to curse," etc.

you and I, you or I : Phrases in which the objective pronoun *me* and the first personal pronoun *I* are often confused; as, "This will not do for *you and I*," instead of "This will not do for *you and me.*" The rule is very simple, viz.: use *I* or *me* in such connection just as if the words "you and" or "you or" were omitted. "They were not citizens as (*you and*) *I*" ; "He is not so tall as (*you or*) *I.*"

you don't say? Compare IS THAT SO?

your's truly: An incorrect form, *yours* being a possessive pronoun does not need the sign of the possessive after it.

Z

zeugma: "Is the joining of two or more words (as nouns) to a third (as a verb) with which only one or a part of them can be made to agree except by using the nouns in different senses, or by taking the verb in different senses in relation to the different nouns, or by letting the underlying logical relation overrule the grammatical—in Greek a very common figure, but in English quite unusual and ordinarily a violation of the principles of construction and a grave fault in diction. "The *control*, as well as the *support*, which a father *exercises* over his family *were*, by the dispensation of Providence, withdrawn"; *control* is properly *exercised*, but *support* is not; the verb-form *were* is made plural to accord, not with the grammatical relation of *control* and *support*, but with the logical relation underlying *as well as* regarded as equivalent to *and*."—STANDARD DICTIONARY. Compare WITH, AND.